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# **LIGUORIAN**

**MAY, 1957**

**ARE YOU AN  
INDIFFERENT CATHOLIC?**

**SUFFERING WITHOUT SORROW**

**WOMEN, LOVE AND GOD**

**BLIND DATES**



# THE Liguorian

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THE LIGUORIAN

LIGUORI, MO.

# ARE YOU AN INDIFFERENT CATHOLIC?

If only a small percentage of indifferent Catholics could be made fervent, countless souls would be saved that are now being lost. Here are the signs of the indifferent Catholic.

TO ALL of you who read these lines, the question in the above title is addressed with the warmest charity and the deepest concern for your everlasting welfare and that of those who are dependent upon you in any way. Perhaps you don't know whether to answer the question with a yes or with a no; perhaps at first sight you are inclined to brush the question aside with a brusque no, or to say to yourself that it does not matter whether it applies to you or not. For that very reason ten different signs are set down below by which you can judge whether you fall under the heading of an indifferent or lax or lukewarm Catholic.

Before presenting the signs, however, it is necessary that you consider a general definition or description of an indifferent Catholic, and that we remind you of the tremen-

dous importance of doing something about it if you find yourself marked by the signs that characterize the indifferent Catholic.

## I. What Is an Indifferent Catholic?

**H**AN "indifferent" Catholic, as the word is being used here, is one who is so lax in the practice of his faith that he is in danger at any time of either losing or abandoning his faith, or, even if he retains his faith, of losing his soul. At baptism, the infused virtue of faith is rooted in the soul of every Catholic. But the indifferent Catholic is one who has never "stirred up" his faith (to use the phrase of St. Paul) to the extent that it has formed convictions and principles that color and motivate his everyday life. He has faith, but with a minimum of good works, or without the indispensable minimum of good works necessary for salvation.

**T**HIS can be understood by comparison. All Catholics place themselves by their actions in one of three classes.

First, there are "fervent" Catholics. They are the ones who realize that their first purpose in life is to remain in the state of sanctifying grace, to increase grace in their souls as the years pass, and so to make certain of the salvation of their souls. A fervent Catholic may suffer the misfortune of falling into a serious sin on a rare occasion, but if he does, he immediately seeks God's forgiveness by a good confession and restores himself to the grace of God again. Moreover the fervent Catholic has regular habits of daily prayer and of frequent reception of the important sacraments of confession and Holy Communion.

Farthest removed from such fervent Catholics are the fallen-away or lapsed Catholics. They may still call themselves Catholics on occasion, but they have given up every effort at living as Catholics. They may be living in an invalid marriage. They may have succumbed to the constant practice of birth-prevention or adultery. They may go to Mass once or twice a year, but anybody who knows them would have to agree that they are lapsed or fallen-away Catholics, making no effort to do what God requires of any individual who would save his immortal soul.

In between these two classes are the indifferent, the lax, the half-hearted, the lukewarm Catholics. They cling quite fondly to the title of Catholic: they go to Mass on Sunday with fair regularity; they may contribute to their parish in a sporadic way; but they are indifferent to

the three things that mark the fervent Catholic: 1) using the means of grace given by Christ to grow in personal union with God; 2) staying out of sin, or arising from sin as quickly as possible; 3) endeavoring to learn more and more about their faith so as to be ready for attacks on their faith, and for doubts and dangers to faith that every Catholic must face in the world today. All the ten signs of indifference given below center around these three things.

## II. The Importance of Not Being Indifferent

THE question, "Are you an indifferent Catholic?" is supremely important for two reasons. First, because the indifferent or lax Catholic can slip into hell with the greatest of ease. God Himself has warned the indifferent of this terrible danger in the words of the Apocalypse, 3:15-16: "I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot. I would that thou wert cold or hot. But because thou art lukewarm and neither cold nor hot, I will begin to vomit thee out of my mouth."

The inference seems to be plain, that God finds it easier to convert and save the outright sinner, the "cold" heart, than the person who has drifted into lukewarmness and indifference. Experience backs up this inference; so often it requires greater graces and more extraordinary measures to prod the indifferent into fervor than to convert great sinners. There is a kind of self-satisfaction that goes with indifference; a resistance to warnings and a rejec-

tion of graces; a slipping and sliding backward that can suddenly end in eternal tragedy.

The second reason for the importance of the question, "Are you an indifferent Catholic?" is the harm that is done to other souls by indifferent and lax Catholics. There are vast numbers of indifferent Catholics. They make religion seem like a side issue in life or a thin veneer on their characters, easily scuffed up and cracked and worn through. They easily win others to their mode of living because the world is on their side. Where the world cannot destroy religion in the heart of a man, it is content to see it becoming a minor and unimportant matter for those who profess it at all. Indifference in religion is wonderfully compatible with secularism, the disease that makes a person think much more of this life than the next.

Indifferent Catholics are not always such solely through their own fault. Indifferent Catholic parents are usually responsible for the indifference of their children. Such parents often add to their accountability by depriving their children of a Catholic schooling, or, where none such is available, of the equivalent in sound Catholic training and instruction.

But whether, as a Catholic reading these lines, you have been thrust into indifference through the neglect and bad example of others, or whether you have drifted into indifference through your own fault and your excessive love of the world, it is important that you recognize your state

and do something about it now. To help you recognize it, the ten signs or marks of the indifferent Catholic are here presented for your self-examination.

### III. Ten Signs of the Indifferent Catholic

#### 1. You receive the sacraments of penance and Holy Communion only once or twice or a few times a year.

The fervent Catholic knows that these two great sacraments are his first and most important means of defense against sin, and more than that, his certain means of positive union with God through grace. He knows that one of the greatest popes, Saint Pius X, told the whole Catholic world that it is the desire of Christ and the will of the Church and the need of the faithful that all should receive Holy Communion often and even daily if possible. He tries to live by that clear manifestation of the will of God.

If you are an indifferent Catholic, you never get around to more than one or two confessions a year, nor to any more frequent Communions. If pressed for the reasons for your neglect, you say: "I don't have time to do any more," or, "I don't see any need for doing any more," or, "I just don't like to go to confession," (as if anybody did!), or, "I always intend to do better but I just don't." Thus you put your indifference into words.

#### 2. You express disfavor and disapproval of those who do receive the sacraments often.

Not every indifferent Catholic criticizes those who are more fervent

than he is, but more often than not such criticisms are the self-defense of the indifferent. Mark yourself as indifferent if you catch yourself saying often: "Too many hypocrites receive Communion every Sunday or every day," or, "Frequent Communion is just for pious old women," or, "I don't see that it does much good for those who run to church and the sacraments often."

This mark of the indifferent Catholic does the greatest harm when it is directed against the members of a person's family. If, as a husband and father of a family, indifference to religion inspires you to deride and berate your wife and children for receiving the sacraments often, you are guilty of great scandal, and it is doubtful that God will grant you the grace to believe in Him and love Him for very long.

**3. You fall into serious sin quite frequently, with ready excuses for your falls.**

The fervent Catholic has accepted the central teaching of Christ and His Church that the only real evil in the whole world is mortal sin. He builds his whole life around the primary endeavor to avoid mortal sin.

Indifferent Catholics have a language of their own concerning mortal sin—their own mortal sins—and it is absolutely contrary to the teachings of Christ. If you are an indifferent Catholic, then, when you fall into a sin of drunkenness or fornication or adultery or deliberately missing Mass on Sunday or any other sin, you say, mostly to yourself but sometimes to others: "After all, I'm

human; I never claimed to be a saint," or, "I've got strong passions; I can't be blamed for giving in to them once in a while," or, "Everybody does these things; why should I be different?"

Thus indifference runs into pride and creates foolish excuses for the greatest offenses against God. The fervent may fall, but humility, remorse and sorrow fill their souls immediately after they do.

**4. After a fall into serious sin, you think nothing of remaining in your state of sin for weeks and months, without advertence to the importance of getting to confession.**

A fervent Catholic cannot abide being in the state of sin. He uses the first opportunity for making a good confession, even sometimes asking a priest to hear his confession out of the scheduled hours for confession.

If you are indifferent, that is not the case with you. You may fall into a number of great sins during your summer vacation and then scarcely think about them or worry about them until the time comes for your annual Easter confession, nine or ten months later. All that time you are walking about in a state of living death, in danger of being thrust into hell if you were suddenly to die.

**5. You make no honest attempt to break with habits of venial sin.**

The fervent Catholic is mindful of Christ's words: "Be ye perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect." To him those words are a mandate against his surrendering to habits of venial sin. He may fall often, but he

does not give up; he keeps trying to do better.

If you are an indifferent Catholic, the idea of resisting your habits of venial sin rarely crosses your mind. You have a habit of profanity, filling your conversation with the frequent and unholy use of God's name, but you not only don't try to break the habit, you think it makes you appear forceful and bold. You let your temper fly at your wife and children, and instead of recognizing this as an offense against God's law, you think it is your right as the head of the family.

Your indifference to venial sin has made you blind to a truth that runs through all the teachings of Christianity: venial sins unchecked inevitably lead a soul to the threshold of mortal sin.

*6. You are led by human respect to join freely in the sins of others, for example, telling obscene stories, drinking to excess, criticizing and backbiting neighbors, etc.*

You may be indifferent to God's wishes and God's commands, but you are not indifferent to the approval and praise of other human beings, even the most sinful, around you in the world. Thus filthy story-tellers find a good listener in you, and also one who feels that it is necessary, in order to be "one of the crowd," to match each obscene story heard with one of your own telling.

The same thing is true of other "social" sins. Detractors and calumniators can always count on you to

listen to their stories about the absent, and to add tidbits of information, true or suspected or false, on your own. When the "boys" or "girls" are drinking more than is good for them, you wouldn't dare have one of them point a finger at you and say that you are "cold sober."

*7. You make only the most shoddy and irregular attempts at prayer, and rarely attend any religious service other than the obligatory Mass on Sunday.*

The words of St. Alphonsus have become an axiom in Catholic thinking and practice: "He who prays is infallibly saved; he who does not pray is infallibly lost." The fervent Catholic is therefore constantly aware that he needs prayer, and he builds into his daily life a schedule of prayer. He prays every morning and evening; before and after meals; in every attack of temptation; and he uses opportunities of special devotions in his parish church to make up for past failures in prayer, and to strengthen his habits of prayer for the future.

If you are an indifferent Catholic, however, prayer plays a very minor role in your life. You find yourself going days and weeks without any decent morning or night prayers, and when you do pray, it is without much realization of what you are doing. You have never acquired the habit of spontaneous praying when bothered by temptations. You are rarely if ever seen at any evening devotion in your parish church.

*8. You have no interest in acquiring any further knowledge of your religion than you absorbed as a child, and are incapable of defending or explaining even the most simple teachings of your faith.*

Faith can die out in a soul for one of two reasons, either because of deliberate and oft-repeated serious sins, or as a result of intellectual sloth. Many among the thousands of fallen-away Catholics in America studied the catechism as children, received the sacraments and went to Mass regularly as children, but, as they advanced to maturity, became indifferent about learning anything more about their faith than they were capable of knowing as children. Thus they became easy prey to anti-Catholic misrepresentations and lies about their religion, and eventually gave up its practice altogether.

You are an indifferent Catholic right now if 1) you never impel yourself to read anything spiritual or religious; 2) you are at a complete loss for words or ideas with which to answer, at least in your own mind, criticisms or denials of Catholic doctrine; 3) you have doubts about certain Catholic teachings that make you wonder whether it is wise to be a Catholic at all.

*9. You are a constant criticizer of the clergy, and a constant complainer that "they want too much money."*

Ninety per cent of the criticism of the clergy comes from people who have never made an effort to meet and know their priests, never taken part in parish activities, never tried

to understand the material needs of the Church, nor how money received is administered. The indifferent Catholic stands a long way off from the daily activities of the Church and just criticizes and condemns what is being done. His main criticism is that the Church wants to take too much of his money.

You are an indifferent Catholic then, if you must admit to a kind of neurotic fear that the closer you get to the Church and the more fervent you become as a Catholic, the greater will be the Church's effort to take money away from you. You are an indifferent Catholic if actually you are not doing your share to support your parish, on the plea that the Church gets too much money anyway. You are an indifferent Catholic if your only contribution to parish affairs is that of criticism.

*10. You measure the value of faith and prayer and spiritual activities in terms of material rewards alone.*

Too many Catholics are indifferent, showing most of the signs outlined above, because they have never maturely accepted the principles which Jesus Christ incorporated in the true religion: 1) man must practice religion, must do God's will, must keep His commandments, must pray and receive the sacraments, primarily for the purpose of saving his soul and reaching heaven; 2) along the way of salvation every human being must in some way share the cross of Christ by which he was redeemed.

If you are an indifferent Catholic,

you express your ignorance or denial of these two principles in words like these: "I used to be a fervent Catholic, but what did it get me? Nothing. I'm still poor." Or, "I used to pray a lot, make novenas, go to Communion often, but all I got for my pains was more trials and crosses. So I quit." In short, you are indifferent because you have permitted the pagan world to convince you that the only test of religion or anything

else is whether it brings you prosperity in this world.



**L**OOK well to it, indifferent Catholics. If the ten signs, or a good number of them apply to you, shake yourself out of your torpor before it is too late. Decide now that you won't any longer be among those whom God "begins to vomit out of His mouth, because they are lukewarm."

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#### IS AMBITION BAD?

If a man has as his sole purpose in life to gain success in the world to the exclusion of all thought of the welfare of his soul, then his ambition is evil.

The first mark of such evil ambition is to be found in the fact that a person is spending all his time at making money or scheming for power or pursuing fame. Such a man often says bluntly: "I have no time for going to church, or for the practices of religion—no time even for prayer. I'm too busy with my career." He has lost all perspective of true values in life and no matter how successful he may be, his ambitions will bring him a lonely old age and a bitter eternity.

The second mark of evil ambition is the willingness to sacrifice moral integrity for the sake of getting ahead. The evilly ambitious business man will embrace injustice or will promote immorality if he can become richer thereby; the evilly ambitious social-climbing wife will neglect her family, refuse to bear children and even deny her faith if these things seem necessary to make her prominent in society.

The third mark of evil ambition is an incapacity for true friendship and charity. An ambitious person uses other human beings only as stepping-stones to his own advancement. He has neither time nor service for those who cannot help him onward to fame and success, and he quickly drops those who have helped him when their usefulness has come to an end.

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#### *You Have Been Warned!*

A Detroit firm is offering a phonograph-type warning system which can be built into a car. At 50 miles per hour, a voice warns: "You are too fast for town, I hope you are in the country." At 75 miles per hour, the voice says: "You might lose control. Are your brakes all right?" At 90 miles per hour the record simply asks: "Have you paid up your life insurance?"

*Parade*

Mathias Huber, C.S.S.R.

# Little Lessons

## in Catholic Living

### A Visit From Our Mother

IT is difficult to find your way through a driving storm on a dark night; and yet that is just what the Christian must do on his way to heaven: find his way home through a driving storm on a dark night. But the true Christian is never overcome by the fear of being lost. The city of heaven, high on a mountain, is always ablaze with light that leads him on and shows him the way; and we can easily picture to ourselves on top of the skyscrapers of the city of heaven, great signs of neon and electric lights, blinking and flashing these words for our strength and encouragement: Mary, Gate of Heaven — Mary, Help of Christians — Mary, Mother of Perpetual Help.

But I am sure you know our Blessed Mother well enough to realize that she would never be satisfied with that. She would never be satisfied just to let us have only the inspiration which we could get by looking up at a few imagined electric or neon lights reminding us of her power to help us. From the very beginning of her career as the mother of God, she was not satisfied in being just a stay-at-home; rather, she went out visiting — visiting her fellow men — bringing them help and grace and blessings.

When the angel of the Lord told her that she was to be the mother of God, he told her also that her cousin Elizabeth would become the mother of a son. Quite soon after receiving this message from the angel Mary went, with haste, to visit her cousin Elizabeth to help in the work of the household. The Scriptures tell of this event which we know as the visitation — the second joyful mystery of the rosary.

It was a long journey to the home of Elizabeth. It was a journey that led through long stretches of rough country, with many a hill to climb. None of the comforts and facilities of our modern manner of travel were available: no automobile, no streamlined trains. And all the unpleasantness of such a journey! Poor shelter along the way; dust and wind and burning sun! Mary knew how difficult the trip would be, *but she was going to help someone*. So never mind all the miles on foot, and all the dust, and the fatigue and the tired feet. All this counted for nothing.

So she entered the house of Zachary and greeted her cousin Elizabeth. And it came to pass that when Elizabeth heard the greeting of Mary, the infant leaped in her womb, and Eliz-

abeth was filled with the Holy Spirit. Mary's words and God's power! Mary's visit and the grace of God! She enters the home, pronounces the words of greeting, and behold how everything around her is tingling with the power of God; how the grace of God enters the soul of John before his birth at the sound of Mary's voice. And Elizabeth asks her wonderingly: "Why is this that the mother of my Lord should come to me?"

**I**N this visit we see the fundamental pattern which is found again and again in the visits which our Blessed Mother makes to her fellow men. Blessings and graces! Help for her cousin Elizabeth and sanctifying grace for the infant unborn! Who knows how many of these visits of love Mary made to her neighbors and friends even during her lifetime?

At least there is one visit for which we have proof from the Gospel: the visit she paid to the young couple on the day of their marriage at Cana. You know the facts. No wine! At a wedding! Mary's motherly eye noticed the lack of wine. This would never do. This, remember, was not a question of bringing grace to a soul or converting a sinner. This was a matter of shielding two young married people from social embarrassment at their wedding feast. So she asks for a miracle in the easy assured tones of one who is certain of being answered favorably: "They have no wine." There was a delay of a few moments, of course, but they got the wine, and the wine was the best wine served at the wedding.

See the pattern. A favor, a blessing for the married couple; and grace,

too, trailed along in the wake of this visit of the mother of Christ; for the Gospel continues: "And His disciples believed in Him."

**D**URING the many years that have passed since that day we know at least fragments of the story that tells of our Blessed Mother's visitations to those who called on her for help and even to those who did not call upon her name at all. Don't you remember hearing early in your childhood (and being thrilled by it) some story that told how the Blessed Mother appeared to a saint or holy person? And did you never dream that the Blessed Virgin came to talk to you and help you? Did you never have a longing to see her and to greet her face to face, to ask her for a favor?

And even though you never saw her or spoke to her, who except God and Mary and you knows about those secret graces she brought to your soul: sorrow for sin, a good confession, victory over temptation? Who knows how many blessings she brought you for soul and body: recovery from sickness, peace in the home, employment? Even you do not know the entire story — perhaps not even half of it.

But we do know that even though she does not come to us in person, still every grace and blessing we receive from God, comes to us through the hands of our Blessed Mother. Day after day she is at our side, visiting us, guiding us, protecting us, inspiring and consoling us, doing favors for us as she did for her cousin Eliz-

abeth at the first visitation, as she did for the young couple at Cana; and little do we know in our thoughtless way of living how much Mary, the best of mothers, is doing for us all the time in being our Mother of Perpetual Help.

As for personal visits and apparitions, we can truly say that the Virgin Mother Mary has never forgotten her blessed habit of visiting her children here upon the earth.

She came, so we are told, to inspire St. Dominic to spread the devotion of the rosary among the people so that by this means they could overcome the attacks made upon the Church by some crooked-thinking persons of the time. A little over a hundred years ago she came personally to Catherine Labouré and brought us the miraculous medal to wear. Long before that we know of another visit to St. Simon Stock to place her scapular upon our shoulders.

**A**ND when we recall the many other places where the Blessed Mother appeared for the good of the souls and bodies of her children, it is almost like tracing upon a map a trip around the world.

But that is no reason for surprise. You can't expect anything else of our Blessed Mother, because she *is* a mother. What mother would sit snugly in a big soft chair before the fire and doze the hours away, when she knows that there is work to be done, that her children are in danger and that she can help or warn them to mend their ways? So we expect her to come into the world whenever she thinks it necessary — to come per-

sonally, alive, seen by the eyes of men, sometimes joyful, sometimes sad and sorrowful, to bring a message of consolation or a warning against sin.

But if she comes again and again, as she has done within recent years and repeats her warnings — the same warnings of the terrible things that will come if men will not stop committing sin, isn't there reason to believe that things are pretty bad and to ask: "What does she want *me* to do about it?" She tells you, "Do penance and pray for sinners. Pray the rosary."

There's something for you to do. Not for the people next door only; but for YOU and your family. Do penance and pray for sinners and pray the rosary — not so much for the good things of this world, for today there are greater goods at stake.

"Do not," she says, "look for more miraculous signs. I will work in secret. I will give you peace of heart, if you will fulfill my requests."

Only on this peace of heart can the peace of nations rest.

**I**N her words there is no flattery for the modern world; no sentimental, sugary piety in her warnings or in her promises. Frightful judgments are threatened, and even for the true children of Mary terrible trials are to come. But with our hand in hers we shall never be overcome by fear, no matter how dark the night or how heavy the storm; she will be at our side like a mother to lead us always onward and upward until we are at home with God..

# THE MASS---

## MY BANQUET

The Mass is both a sacrifice and a sacrament: as a sacrifice it gives adoration, reparation, gratitude to God; as a sacrament it gives God and His grace to us.

JOHN N. McCORMICK, C.SS.R.

JOHN A. TREINEN, C.SS.R.

**T**HREE is a double reason why Communion by the faithful ought to be a part of every sharing in the Mass; a double motive to impel us never to omit Communion from our Mass unless by a state of disgrace we are unworthy.

The first reason is our need of the strengthening food of the body and blood of Christ. There is nothing so ridiculous, so absurd, so pitiful as the *hunger strike* of a supernatural kind of so many Catholics. They complain of the exacting demands of a good Catholic life; they murmur against the severity of the commandments, of the heavy demands of the laws of the Church. Besides, they are constantly exhausting themselves in the spiritual combat of life; now it is a sacrifice to be made — now a temptation to be battled — now passions to be mastered. And in this constant struggle, this battle which never ends as long as life lasts, the will exhausts its energies. We need,

therefore, to be constantly refreshed, re-supplied with supernatural vigor. Have we an unfailing source of strength and life? Indeed we have: "My flesh is meat indeed and My blood is drink indeed. He that eateth the flesh of the Son of Man and drinketh His blood shall not see death forever." We can hear the injunction of Christ in our ears: "Each day do you eat this bread of the strong, because each day you must suffer and struggle and labor; just as each day you eat the bread of earth because each day in the labors of life your body is weakened and worn by the toils of life."

The second reason for receiving Holy Communion whenever we assist at the sacrifice of the Mass, even daily, is that our assistance at holy Mass is, in a certain sense, incomplete unless we receive the body and blood of Christ in Holy Communion.

### Sacrifice and Sacrament

**C**HIRST gave us the Mass both as a sacrifice and a sacrament. The sacrifice is a gift in which we offer God adoration, gratitude and reparation. The sacrament is a gift in which God offers us Himself as the food of our souls. At Mass we give to God what is His — let us then take from it what He made ours!

Every time Mass is offered there goes out to us a pleading invitation from Christ: "Come to the wedding feast!" How we restrict and limit the graces that Mass brings to us when we try to take part in the sacrifice without sharing the banquet which Christ has spread for us! We do not really take part in the Mass completely at all. We treat Christ, Who is the Host of this divine party, as we should treat a host at any party to which we were invited, if we were to come to the dinner table, unfold our napkin and then refuse to partake of the food set before us.

How must Christ feel, when we recall that with desire He desires to eat this feast with us! How must He be disappointed when He recalls what this banquet has cost Him in His passion and death; when He remembers how lovingly He has amassed here the graces of strength and peace for our tired and dejected souls! The beggar seems to turn his back on the hand that offers him a meal. The dying person apparently turns away from the medicine of life which the divine physician holds out.

Thus Christ is made almost to feel again the desolation of being aban-

doned by His friends and left alone on the Calvary of the altar. How like to Good Friday are so many Sunday mornings, repeated in thousands of churches — Good Fridays multiplied a thousand times — as the crowds file by His cross and barely look up to Him. So few ask Him why He thirsts; so few partake of the gift of His body which was broken and His blood which was shed, now become food and drink for them. Ah, the precious loss of such precious food and drink!

Though the vicar of Christ has yielded to the objections of hunger, late hours and health, why will people still remain glued to their pews when Christ begs: "Take ye and eat!" To say nothing of going out of their way to attend daily Mass, why do so many neglect to share fully even in their Sunday Mass? Either they are in the state of grace and could receive, and then their refusal must be attributed to coldness or carelessness — coldness to the love of Christ or carelessness for their own spiritual good; or they are not in the state of grace and dare not receive, and then their Catholic conscience, their concern for their own salvation, ought to bring them to their knees in the confessional, there to be raised again to life.

### Objections

**B**UT some may object: "I do receive Communion frequently and still I am not a saint, still daily tumble into the same faults, still have to fight the same habitual sins. I seem to get so little out of my Commun-

ions. What is the matter?" One answer is that all too many communicants receive Communion without being properly prepared to receive the graces of Communion.

A flower garden cannot spring from a cement sidewalk, even though you spread the most costly seeds over that hard and unresponsive stone. Nor can a soul blossom forth in the roses of holiness even though the divine seed of the Eucharist be cast upon it, if that soul is not disposed to receive the graces.

It is the same sun and the same rain and the same seed that is given to the rich black soil of Illinois and to the sandy soil of New Mexico, yet one is productive of wealth, the other productive of poverty. Why? Because one is disposed to receive the seed and sun and rain, and the other is not. There is the answer to the sterility of our Communions: our souls are dry, half-barren, sluggish soil and upon them the seed of grace will not bloom to its fullest.

Bring the comparison closer to the Eucharist. A friend may love you intensely, may be constantly offering you affection, favors and gifts. But you do not feel the same toward him; your heart is not on fire as his. You pay little attention to his gifts. You scarcely bother to extend a hand to receive them. You turn from intimate affection. All his love and favors are practically lost on you, simply because you are not sufficiently disposed to receive either his love or his gifts.

**N**OW Christ is that person Who comes to you with an ardent love and unnumbered gifts, with arms and heart loaded with graces, blessings and favors. But his success in giving these gifts depends so much on *your* willingness and *your* capacity to receive them, on *your* faith and love for Him, on *your* extended arms and open heart.

You may have a gallon of the most costly and expensive wines for your friend, but if he has come with only a thimble, no matter how strongly you may want to give it all to him, he can take no more than a thimbleful. Naturally you feel very sad because your love and generosity toward him are thwarted by his coldness and stupidity. So must Christ feel when He comes with His arms filled with infinite treasures of grace and He finds only a thimble-heart and even that half-closed to His love.

Now, how can we improve the soil? How enlarge the thimble? By an intelligent preparation for Holy Communion.

#### Remote Preparation for Communion

**O**UR preparation for Communion should be two-fold: one remote, the other immediate. The remote preparation is the sinless and Christly living of our daily lives. Christ must not be the Friend whom we meet merely for a few warm moments in the morning. He is the Friend Who stands at our side all day and watches over us by night. Really to be prepared for His reception in a fit manner in Communion

ion, we ought never to forsake Him in the course of the day.

Never forsake Him. That is the keynote of a true preparation; never forsake Him. Not by mortal sin, for that sin builds a hard crust around the soul, keeping Him out. Therefore cling closely to Him by seeking only one objective in your daily life: the accomplishment of His holy will, the quest of His pleasure. Try even not to turn from Him by deliberate venial sin. Then He will love to walk and talk with you. Never leave Him, but strive to live thoughtful of Him. Then Christ will dwell by faith in your heart.

We know He walked with Adam and Eve in the evening hours of Eden. He walks with you through the long dreary hours of the day in the Eden of faith. He leaves you only when you drive Him away by serious sin. Do not slight Him, ignore Him, forget Him. You would do that to no other loved one. Do not do it to Him. Have the delicacy of turning hourly to Him during the day, whispering words of love.

#### Immediate Preparation

**T**HE more important preparation is that which you make just before Holy Communion. It consists, ideally, in the intelligent and prayerful participation in the Mass with the priest.

Remember that at the consecration you offered yourself with Christ to your Father. You said, "All glory to God, the Father and Spirit through Christ and with Christ and in Christ." You have celebrated your

Mass, your sacrifice. Now be on the alert to receive back your offering, the sacrament, from the Father. Therefore, recite, at least in your heart, if not from your missal, the prayers that will enlarge the thimble and enrich the soil.

First, the Lord's Prayer, Who offers you now the living daily bread. Then listen to John the Baptist as he points to the Lamb of God Who takes away the sins of the world. Cry out with the Church to Christ to grant the peace He wants you to possess. Bow low as you implore Him to make you cling to His commandments and never to let you be cut away from Him. And finally, hope high that this Communion will bring health to your soul and body, and not guilt or added blame, through Christ our Lord.

Then at last, when the festive bell calls you to your place at the banquet, play the role of the humble soldier of Rome and confess: "O Lord, I am not worthy." You feel the touch of God upon your tongue. One more sigh of sorrow, one silent breath of welcome, one last act of desire. This is the hour — *do* think of it — in which the Son of Man has come. It is consummated.

What has happened? Once before He came to Elizabeth, and the unborn Baptist leaped for joy. Once before He merely looked at water and it became wine. Once He touched a leper and the dead flesh lived again. Once before, He came to a grave and called forth a living friend. Com-

munion time may be only a cool empty moment to you. But warmth and love and longing will bring the torrent of the Mass into your cup—overflowing.

### The Thanksgiving after Communion

**A**ND now a word about thanksgiving. Here the question may be asked: "Why does Mass end so soon after Holy Communion? Why is there not more time given officially for our thanksgiving after Holy Communion?" Our Holy Father gives the best answer. When the sacrifice is finished, it is finished. Hence the congregation that offered it is then dismissed. But he insists that those who were intimately united with Christ in Holy Communion should remain to make a suitable thanksgiving.

The word *thanksgiving* is an incomplete word, almost a misnomer. For it contains so much more than it says. It is something like the word *confession*. That word means accusation, the telling of our sins. Yet we all know that for forgiveness of sin in the sacrament of penance, much more than the mere accusation is required. We take similar liberties with words in our everyday life. When a friend invites us to dinner, we do not merely eat, wipe our mouths and dash out of the house. We do much more than take dinner. We comment occasionally on the appetizing dishes served. We express our special gratitude to the hostess for all the work involved in preparing it for us. We very often praise

one or the other choice dish that is particularly tasteful. And then when the table has been cleared we sit around for several hours to make the evening a pleasure for those who invited us. We exchange our views on personal matters. We may even become intimate enough to complain of our needs, or to reveal our troubles. And once again before taking leave we mention how grateful we are and what delight the invitation brought us.

Our Lord wants us to be at least human with Him. That should not be too difficult as long as we keep our faith alive to the great thing that has come to pass in Holy Communion. St. John Eudes used to insist that for a fully worthy Communion two eternities would be required, one eternity to prepare and the other to thank Christ for the gift of Himself. Even the saints did not have this opportunity but they supplied as well as they could. The great St. Theresa was once asked how she spent her time after Holy Communion. "That is the time to do business with Christ," she so rightly answered.

### Suggestions

**T**HE moment you feel the touch of the host on your tongue, send your guardian angel and your favorite saint and Mary, your Mother, in advance into your heart to make the final last-minute preparations in your stead. And when you have returned to your pew, get down to business. We make the following suggestions, merely as guides for your convenience. Build your business-time

around the word F A T H O M N . Faith in the Real Presence of Christ truly and substantially in your soul. I believe. Adoration: O Jesus, you are all the mountains and I but a grain of sand. You are all the forests and I but a leaf on a dying tree. You are all the oceans and I but a drop of water. You are Who must be. I am who need not be. Thanks for the goods of nature — the earth, the mountains, the air; our food, our loves, our dreams. Thanks for the goods of grace: for God, for the Church, for our faith — and for this Communion. "O good and gentle Jesus, look down upon me. . . ." Here recite the indulged prayer before a crucifix. "O Jesus, pardon me my sins, save me from the fires of hell." Mary! Thank her for Christmas, for Calvary and for the Mass. She made them all possible. Needs—

of body: health for yourself, your loved ones. Needs — of soul: more charity toward God and your neighbor, grace for your usual weakness, grace to persevere in your resolutions. No more sins!

This conversation with our Lord will take but a few minutes. If you are faithful here, the minutes will multiply but the time will seem so short. You can end it when and as you please, but not until you have thanked Christ once more for this banquet and promised Him to return for another share at your earliest opportunity. Thus your thanksgiving will be a full and rounded-out word. It will have meant a loving visit with the Host Who invited you to supper with Him. It will not be wanting in etiquette, in the refinement of manners that we show toward even the least of our brethren.



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*Thoughts while reading LIFE magazine's explosive Christmas Eve editorial.*

# WOMEN, LOVE AND GOD

BERNARD F. McWILLIAMS, C.S.S.R.

**I**T'S getting so you can't believe your eyes any longer. If Phil Silvers, next week, should spend his whole show in extolling the merits of monthly confession and Communion, don't be surprised. A stranger thing than that has already happened.

"Twas the night before Christmas, 1956. If you don't read editorials, maybe you missed it. But the fact is that LIFE magazine — that slick citadel of broadmindedness just about committed editorial suicide. The editors launched the view that non-Catholics of America have made a sad and serious mistake in attempting to do away with veneration of our Blessed Mother.

At this writing the editors have not been lynched. In fact, they apparently are going to be ignored. A careful perusal of the letters column

in subsequent issues reveals among several complimentary comments, only one irate complaint about the editorial in question. Nor is there any indication that there has been a wholesale cancellation of subscriptions.

But, suicide or not, the editorial was a beautiful thing to read. It would almost have to be since it is all about three undeniably beautiful factors of life, namely: women, love and God. The message at times is shrouded in some confusingly vague verbiage. For example: "Is woman the prisoner of that unwanted *otherness* forged by the impenetrable egotism of the male?"

**H**OWEVER, by and large, what the editors have to say to the American public and especially to the American woman deserves concentrated attention. And if America is not to continue disintegrating, their recommendations should be put into practice with the utmost seriousness and without delay.

Well, then, what do they say that is so important?

The basic thesis of the editorial is that woman stands between God and man. She has a very vital role to play, not just the obvious (but im-

portant) role of perpetuating mankind, but of bringing man to his great and final destiny, the love of God. She must teach love, keep it alive, nourish and foster it, else we are lost.

This idea has been all but buried by the Protestant insistence on the half-truth that only one person, Christ, can bring us to the feet of God. It is true that were it not for Christ's death on the cross, we would never be able to claim our rightful inheritance as children of our heavenly Father. But love is the royal road to heaven (and indeed to earthly happiness) and if no one teaches us to love, we stray far from this road. It is woman's unalterable dignity to show us the beauty and splendor of love. She has been equipped by Providence with a warm, affectionate, outgoing nature that makes her admirably capable of this task. But male selfishness has slowly withered her talent. And things are in a neurotic mess.

Well, maybe not a complete mess. Any priest who travels the country as a missionary and occupies the confessional in town after town will tell you that there are countless thousands of American women whose life is closely modeled after that of Mary, the mother of us all. Their love for their husbands is selfless, devoted, undying; their talent for raising children, giving them warmth and affection with a tireless spirit of self-sacrifice, is clearly evident to anyone who even visits our classrooms.

But the fact remains that far too many American women are the vic-

tims of what can only be called male childishness. What else is all the hullabaloo about Marilyn Monroe but one more bit of evidence that there are millions of American men who never really grew up.

The causes of woman's sad plight are probably very complex; or perhaps it all started with a press agent's build-up of a movie queen. Whatever the causes may be, it is safe to say that many a girl growing up in America thinks that first of all she has to be sexy and glamorous; otherwise life will pass her by. Later she will "fall in love" and will expect constant attention from the boy friend. After marriage she will know love only as long as her glamour lasts. That's what the advertisements tell her. God help the poor girl if she should even get a temporary case of halitosis. And utter disaster will strike after her third pregnancy. Her child-husband wants a playmate, not someone who wishes to make a career out of being "just a housewife." And on and on it goes.

**S**O it is only meet and just that *LIFE* magazine that has had so great a share in putting American woman in such a confused state, should make amends by pointing out clearly and unequivocally that what America needs is love — the kind of love symbolized by Mary. Americans must cease to look upon marriage as legalized sex and consider it once again what it was intended to be from the beginning — the source and nursery of love.

The American woman must cultivate the art of love herself and then

teach it to others, especially to her family. And by love we mean a giving of oneself to others; a deep, abiding and active concern for the happiness and welfare of others; a forgetting of oneself, a sacrificing of oneself. This is the highest vocation of every last one of us; but especially of women. All of us need this kind of love, because of our nature, we need to learn not only to receive but to give this kind of love. And woman is our teacher. For this reason she stands between us and God. If she does not teach us human love, there is very little hope that we will ever arrive at divine love.

The crucial point of departure as far as each individual family is concerned is the type of love that exists between husband and wife. A human being is lonely and incomplete. No other human being, no matter how lovable or loving can fully assuage his loneliness. That is why man and wife together must share the knowledge and love of God. In other words, married love is a fine and beautiful thing; but it must forever remain sterile and unproductive if it is not rooted steadfastly in the love of God. In fact, if husband and wife do not at the same time also love God, their love almost inevitably will wither and die. Thus if she is to live up to her high destiny, woman would do well to try to imitate the Blessed Mother whose love for God and man was great beyond words.

**O**Of course, the Church has been saying all this for centuries. But now that our juveniles, not having been

taught the meaning of true love, are causing us such deep concern; now that so many of our families, that should be cradles of love, are dissolving from sheer hatred; now that sex-mania has reduced many an American woman to a pathetically potential patient of the psychiatrist, maybe it will help somewhat to have LIFE magazine say, "If woman, the sum and complex of all nature, has one role more important than her others, it is the one symbolized by Mary as a source of love. . . . Only as women guard the art and guide the quest of love can mankind know all the kinds and heights of love of which they are capable. The art and the quest begin in the family and end at God's feet."

#### FIRE ALARM

A certain family where the daily recitation of the rosary is the rule relates the following anecdote:

We were having a big birthday party and just as the guests began to arrive, Dad said: "Rosary, please." Instantly there were frowns everywhere and most of us piped up that it just couldn't be said tonight. Dad said that it HAD to be, so we thought — where can we go to say it?

"Why not the children's bedroom," said Dad, "it won't be used." So off we went with our rosaries in our hands, still shaking our heads.

When the door was opened, a cloud of smoke poured out. The little ones had put their dolls to sleep under the bed by candlelight. The candle had done the rest. The rosary saved our home that night and we never objected to the rosary after that.

*Marist Messenger*

# For Wives and Husbands Only

Retort from a Mother-in-law

*Donald F. Miller, C.S.S.R.*



**P**ROBLEM: In answer to the problem presented in THE LIGUORIAN by a 37-year-old wife, whose mother kept urging her not to have any more children, I should like to say that I am a grandmother, and I disagree with your saying that this woman's mother was giving sinful advice by telling her not to have any more children. You look at only one side of the picture. What about these parents who have been helping her and her husband in financial and other ways? A grandmother often gives up her health and everything else to help her married daughter. She keeps house, is called in whenever a baby arrives, baby-sits night after night, etc. This grandmother gets tired of being taken advantage of, and finally tells her daughter just what she thinks about her having any more children. She and her husband should be old enough to realize that they have imposed on her parents enough. I think you should tell them to grow up before they decide to burden the grandparents further. I shall look for your answer in THE LIGUORIAN.

**S**OLUTION: We fear the answer will not be very pleasing to the writer of the above letter; yet it is one that must be written and that we hope will be carefully considered by every Catholic grandparent who has made any sacrifice for a married son or daughter.

First of all, we are well aware that many parents make great sacrifices and extend many services and helps to their married sons and daughters. Such parents will be richly rewarded by God if this

charity was practiced with unselfish motives, and without any desire or attempt to interfere with the private lives of their children, or with the obligations and duties that they mutually vowed to fulfill under God's law.

But this is absolutely certain: the sacrifices that grandparents make for their married children give them no right to tell those children to stop living as man and wife, or to stop having children. Indeed, once a mother uses her sacrifices as an argument to make her daughter stop living as a dutiful wife, or to stop having children, that mother loses all the merit of her sacrifices, gives scandal to her own child, and becomes greatly displeasing in the eyes of God.

It is for the married couple alone to decide, usually only with the advice of a confessor, when they can and may or should practice rhythm for a while, because a justifying reason is present which may or may not include consideration for the sacrifices made in their behalf by the parents of one. But the parents, if they want to please God and avoid sin, must strictly refrain from projecting themselves into the most sacred, most personal, most private area of the married lives of their children — that concerning the use of their marriage rights and the begetting of children. They break the law whenever one of them says to a daughter: "It's time you stop having babies. Make your husband stay away from you. For the love of your old mother and father, don't live like a normal married woman any longer."

# SUFFERING WITHOUT SORROW

FRANCIS M. LEE, C.SS.R.

Christ did not sidestep the problem of suffering; but He gave meaning and motive and divine comradeship to it.

This is not to the point, but if we could walk down just one block of any street in any town and know the problems and sufferings of just any family living there, we would run back to our homes, slam the door and clutch at our own cross, nevermore to roam.

**H**OWEVER, keeping our own clay counsel in this matter of suffering, we human beings have certainly put on a three-ring circus for the angels.

Throughout the centuries, there has always been the hard-boiled set, smugly or stubbornly or hopelessly ignoring suffering. This system takes lots of physical courage and much less intelligence. The ancient Stoics, as they called themselves, seem to have led the way. Outwardly they showed complete indifference to pain. At least that was the plan. The early American Indians were thus stoic under torture, we are told. And the

yogis and fakirs of India concentrate so hard in an effort to share consciousness with the person or object concentrated on that they find little difference between a Simmons Beau-tyrest mattress and a layout of ten-penny nails, points up. Pray for them all.

Then, the slogan crowd. The *Why Worry?* group. The *Look for the Silver Lining* gentry. Try telling that to a mother leaning over the deathbed of her child. Console thusly with a slogan a man whose business is falling into ruins. Give said routine to a man or woman who is so saturated with disgust that he wants to escape from the nauseating odors of fornication and adultery. You cannot cure hurt souls with a slogan. The grace of God is not in a motto.

**S**O our wry little circus goes on. To many of the performers, suffering is a reality, all right; a reality that they hate and curse. The only

escape is sleep; or death. Suffering is a leaden pall to be awakened to each morning and miserably to be lived under until nightfall and sleep's brief pardon. And here is the hopeless philosophy that quickly becomes the spawning ground of the cult of pleasure and the cult of body. For these poor people the only revenge against life's obscene (to them) joke of suffering is to wring out every last moment of physical thrill. Their outlook is a defenseless carrion, awaiting the maggots of pleasure. Only their inventiveness in the quest for physical thrill marks this group off from sheer animality. They are not a small crowd. Anyone who has no belief in eternal life has to settle for this life and the joys thereof.

This is as good a spot as any to examine one's conscience. If you can't stand Sunday Mass because there is no kick to it, and you can't stand Friday because there is too much kick to it, then keep reading.

•

At no place along the line did Christianity so reverse our field of thought completely and drastically as in this matter of suffering. St. Jerome and a companion priest went to visit a wealthy Roman patrician. They sat there listening while the nobleman regaled them with his noble bank statements, the streamlines of his four new chariots, his deliriously happy situation of experiencing no death or sickness in his noble family for many a year. St. Jerome rose and nodded to his companion.

"Come. I will not spend another moment in a house that God has never honored with a visit."

The saints grew afraid when God sent them no suffering a whole day in a row.

**S**O what did Christianity have to say? What did Christ have to say about suffering? One thing we know: He would not go around the problem. Many a Jew had bitten his tongue and backed giddily out of the circle when he had tried to force the Master to the wall with those questions of Caesar's inscription, the woman taken in adultery, the plucking of corn on the Sabbath, and so on.

We will not digress here with deep distinctions having to do with the Creator's permitting rather than causing suffering and sorrow. Nor shall we at length remind ourselves that the greed and passion of one man such as Hitler can bring suffering and hardship to the millions. There is suffering. It is that simple. And our Lord's answer is quite as simple.

"If anyone would be My disciple, let him deny himself, take up his cross and follow Me."

He does not deny suffering. He does not coddle those who suffer. But He gives meaning and motive and divine comradeship to it. No stoicism, no slogan; but no loneliness.

**G**OD is love, and it follows as the night the day that His Son's approach to this problem would have to do with love. I went out to suffer for you. Will you frankly suffer this

because you frankly want to be mine?

Suffering in itself would never be a good thing, a pretty thing. We must do something about it to make it good and beautiful and even priceless. No soldier was ever ashamed of a battle scar across his face as he stood to be decorated by his commanding officer. No martyr was ever ashamed of his torn writhing body as he left it, to stand before his Christ. Oh, he had done something about suffering, all right. He had turned it into the most beautiful, priceless thing that ever came his way. Why, he had turned it into his own heaven. To the martyrs there was a great simplicity about suffering. He went out to die for me, so here I go to die for Him. As in tennis, the score was love.

From the beginning, love has ever needed to be proved by suffering, and suffering is ever the brimming over of the cup of love. The Master is dying, agonizing, fighting for His breath on the cross and we look up to Him through our pain-piteous eyes in a final trading of love and understanding. The veils fall away from this mystery of pain, and there is nothing left but the mystery of love, and that is warmth, indeed. The good Christ has walked these dark valleys and knows what a thing it is to be beaten down by life. For love of us He has walked these ways, and no matter whatever else suffering does to us, it can never leave us lonely again. At the core of pain we can always find Him there, waiting, knowing, caressing.

Take up your cross and follow Me. The saints were pretty clever. They did not follow Him. They picked up their cross and ran until they could fall in step with Him. Now it was easier. Side by side, shoulder to shoulder with a God. The immortal comradeship of suffering.

**A**ND don't ever think that you are suddenly awkward on the human scene because you have great suffering. If that were so, then the Master was hopelessly awkward on the cross, a red gash on a beautiful green world. Human respect and the proprieties were thrown off the cliff that day, the beauty contests and the physical culture set were bombed out, and suffering was so **RIGHT** that our Christ would trade in a broken body and an agonizing soul for the endless millions of us. Since that day, hurt feelings and hurt everything are still the only currency in the markets of heaven. No inflation, no deflation, no change of standard. Take up your cross and **THEN** follow me. And you know what I did on Easter morning. Come, just follow Me. But don't forget your cross. Bring it along. You will need it. I did.

Suffering there will always be. It's in our bones. You can leave husband, wife, children, mother-in-law, situation, problem, town and continent, and when you get as far as your ticket will take you, suffering will have the band out, waiting. Because you cannot escape the fact of original sin. We humans were really hurt by that sin. We will always have sickness and aches and pains. They are all in

the decree, the dishonorable discharge from the garden of Eden. And because the good, kind, pure, pleasant and actually Godlike part of us, our soul, is not fully in charge of the body as God really planned it to be, we will always have our daily docket of smallnesses and meannesses and bickerings and ingenious little ways of hurting one another. So, it's just a matter of deciding what we are going to do about them. Lie in the dust and curse them, or lift up our heads to the only One Who ever gave any sense or dignified meaning to them. Take up your cross and follow Me.

**H**AND I remember Mr. Paradise. Really, his name was Mr. Paradise. And he had had a horrible accident which would strap him to a wheel-chair for the rest of his life. He lost faith and he cursed and he was a first-class thorn in the hospital's communal side. Then, one day, Mr. Paradise thought it all over as we have tried to do in these pages, and he threw off the dust and lifted up his head to our Lord on the cross, and he also got hold of a prettier vocabulary. And he turned that hospital upside down. In a nice way. In a very funny, very nice way. He began to visit the patients. What the books call "a ray of sunshine." Every day he made all the rounds, a hot pilot in the wheel-chair echelon. If he missed a room, the superintendent was called on the carpet by the patient. The sick people didn't want the doctor or priest or sister or nurse; they wanted MR. PARADISE! NOW! Doctors were tempted to prescribe, "Take Mr. Paradise, twice a day."

And when it was all over, and Mr. Paradise went home to visit forever his namesake, I asked the Sister Superioreess of the hospital whatever the answer might be. Because, you see, Mr. Paradise had never been for one moment without exquisite pain at the base of his spine; but he had never complained, and so far from being a burdensome companion to the suffering people, he was their very paradise-on-wheels. And so I learned this beautiful answer from the nun:

"Just before Mr. Paradise died, I asked him the same thing. What was the secret that made him so loved? And then he told me; he told me that it had taken him a long, lonely, bitter time to find a meaning to pain and suffering. And then one day he found Someone to suffer with and to suffer for, and it was no longer lonely and no longer bitter. But he made a great decision that day. Not only would he take up his cross, but he would take up ALL of it. After all, it was his, so he would never parcel it out, splinter by splinter, to anyone and everyone who would listen to his troubles."

"And so that was all, Sister," said Mr. Paradise. "Nobody is clever enough to say anything that can truly brighten the life of a really sick person, so I just listened. I guess they thought I was a wonderful talker. Actually, I just went around collecting splinters from their crosses. It made theirs lighter, and if mine became a little heavier, well, I had a wheel-chair to tote it. Those folks were flat on their back."

**S**O goodbye, Mr. Paradise. And do pray that we can carry our crosses, shoulder to shoulder with

Him. And please, an extra prayer that we can keep our splinters to ourselves.



# POINTS of FRICTION

*Louis G. Miller, C.S.S.R.*

## Sensitiveness

**T**O be overly sensitive is to be a source of friction in human relationships; there can be little doubt of that. The hypersensitive person is a cross both to himself and to those with whom he lives and associates. Let us submit this matter of sensitiveness to a brief analysis, and try to put it in its proper perspective.

First of all, it should be recognized that people of a certain type of temperament can't help being sensitive. Some by nature are phlegmatic in their attitude towards life, and like the armadillo, appear well-armored against scratches and slight cuts. But by the same token there are others who have been endowed by nature with a highly efficient radar system. Their emotions and feelings are attuned to the slightest variations in the atmosphere and climate of human relationships. The phlegmatic person is very slow to take offense at any slight, and there is not much virtue for him in this fact. The sensitive person, on the other hand, is inclined to be introspective and melancholic. It is very easy for him to recognize slights, even sometimes where they do not exist. He is inclined to brood over these real or imagined slights, making himself and those around him thoroughly miserable.

There is certainly no disgrace in the fact that a person is endowed with a

sensitive temperament. From such a temperament can spring great and beautiful accomplishments. A vivid imagination and delicately balanced feelings and emotions make it possible for one to appreciate to a high degree beauty and goodness wherever they are to be found.

But every temperament has its good side and its bad. To be sensitive is good, but to let oneself grow overly sensitive causes unhappiness. The sensitive person, therefore, has his work cut out for him. His task is to bring out the best in his temperament, and to be on his guard against the growth of evil tendencies.

Here are three practical rules; if you are inclined to be over-sensitive:

1. Make a valiant effort to avoid brooding over real or imagined slights.
2. Don't let your natural tendency to introspection become exaggerated; force yourself into a healthy, active association with others.
3. Build up regular habits of prayer, and stick to them.

**S**O much for the sensitive person himself. For others who do not have this particular problem, let them be patient. Every temperament has its faults, and patience on the part of all will reduce the friction which inevitably arises when poor fallen human nature puts itself on display.

# BLESSED

Saints for the Married

## MARGARET

### CLITHEROW

LOUIS G. MILLER, C.SS.R.

MRS. John Clitherow, housewife of the town of York in England, manifested in her life an intriguing combination of the ordinary and the heroic. And in the end, one must add, there was more than a touch of the gruesome. She died in the year 1586 in the fearful torture of being slowly crushed to death beneath a heavily weighted door. A strange end for one who, according to her earliest biographer, was the very model of a good housewife, witty, cheerful and hard working.

#### BEFORE MARRIAGE

MARGARET was the daughter of a wealthy candlemaker, Thomas Middleton, who for a time held the eminent position of sheriff in his native York. She grew up in surroundings like any English girl of her class in Elizabethan times. Little indeed is known of her personal life in these early years.

In the year 1571 she married John Clitherow, a butcher by trade, and a respectable citizen who, like Margaret's father, was prominent in civic affairs and held several political positions of prestige.

#### CONVERT TO THE FAITH

ENGLAND had been forcibly torn away from the true faith and its central authority by the gross Henry VIII a generation before Margaret was born. While the pendulum swung back briefly to Catholic ways under Queen Mary, Elizabeth, Mary's successor, soon made it clear where her sympathies lay. Hatred of the Catholic Church smouldered at first, but soon burst out into open persecution. To be a priest in England was to be a traitor. To say Mass or even to hear Mass was an offense punishable by death. Non-attendance at Church of England services could result in heavy fines.

It was against such a desperate background that Margaret Clitherow, born and bred a Protestant, followed her conscience and became a Catholic. This was two or three years after her marriage. She had been led to study the faith, according to her biographer, "finding no substance, truth or Christian comfort in the ministers of the new gospel, nor in their doctrine itself, and hearing also many priests and lay people to

suffer for the defense of the ancient Catholic faith."

Her husband had not the courage to follow her heroic example, although he was good-hearted enough not to raise serious objections then or later to her practice of the Catholic religion. And God knows he was sorely tried by it all in a material way, with warnings and fines and badgering by the civil authorities. His patience is a wonderful testimony to the love Margaret had awakened in her husband. In fact, he continued to praise his wife to all who would listen to him, saying ruefully that he had only two complaints against her: she fasted too much, and she would not accompany him to church.

#### GOOD HOUSEWIFERY

**I**NDEED, in every way Margaret showed herself to be like the scriptural valiant woman. She must have been possessed of a charming personality, for we are told that everyone loved her, and would run to her for help, comfort and counsel in distress.

But she was also shrewd and capable in business matters, so that her husband left the financial management of his business largely to her with perfect confidence. Yet she did not become so immersed in business as to forget her more important duties as a mother. She trained and taught her children with wise discipline and deep love. A touching detail has come down to us; during her final imprisonment, when she knew she would see her family no

more, she sent her shoes and stockings to her little 12-year-old daughter, Agnes, to signify that the girl should follow in her mother's footsteps.

Her lasting influence on her children is apparent in this, that, even in such dangerous and discouraging times, her daughter Agnes fled the country and became a nun at Louvain, while two of her sons afterwards became priests.

#### SECRET ALTAR SOCIETY

**H**IDING and sheltering priests was a most grievous offense against the civil law under Queen Elizabeth. It was this charitable and pious work in defiance of an unjust law which finally brought Margaret to her death. It was a dangerous and a desperate task, as may be seen from this, that out of 300 priests who came to England to serve the faithful there in the last twenty years of Elizabeth's reign, 150 were discovered and died on the gallows, together with a large number of the laypeople who were associated with them.

Margaret knew the chance she was taking. She knew that a small army of secret informers made even talking to a priest a hazardous thing. Yet she welcomed these poor fugitives, hid them in secret closets in her house by day, and devoutly attended their Masses said in her home under flickering tapers in the darkness of the night. She took great joy, indeed, in supplying and tending all that was required for the service of the altar, both vestments and vessels.

## THE END AND THE BEGINNING

FOR several years Margaret carried on her apostolate, during which time she was more than once brought before the magistrate, and even suffered a period of some months imprisonment. At last, on March 10, 1586, the police descended upon her house in force and after a careful search, found a priest's chamber with articles laid out for the saying of Mass. It was enough in those barbarous times to condemn her, and she was hurried off to jail.

Although she knew that this time death in all likelihood awaited her, she was far from dispirited. She joked and laughed and finally felt constrained to remark to a Catholic lady imprisoned with her:

"Sister, we are so merry together that I fear, unless we be parted, to lose the merit of our imprisonment."

She was brought after a few days before the judge, and formally accused of harboring and maintaining priests and of attending Mass. When asked if she chose to plead guilty or not guilty, she replied:

"I know of no offense whereof I should confess myself guilty. Having made no offense, I need no trial."

From this position she never swerved in this and subsequent hearings. Her reason evidently was to forestall a formal jury trial. In such a trial she knew some of her family or fellow Catholics might be called to testify, and did not wish to put them to such a severe test of loyalty and faith.

And so at last she had to listen to the terrible sentence which English law decreed for anyone who would not plead guilty: that she should be pressed to death.

"God be thanked!" she said serenely, upon hearing it. "All that He shall send me is welcome. I am not worthy of so good a death as this."

She was denied the consolation of seeing her children for the last time, and March 25, the Friday in Passion Week, was set as the day of her execution. She spent the greater part of the previous night on her knees in prayer, and when the sheriff came next morning to summon her, "all marvelled to see her joyful, smiling countenance."

After being given a moment for her last prayer, she was made to strip and lie flat on the ground, with a sharp stone under her back, and her hands bound to posts at the side. A door was placed over her, and weights placed upon it to the quantity of seven or eight hundred pounds. According to observers, she was about fifteen minutes in dying, and her last words were "Jesu, Jesu, Jesu, have mercy upon me." At the time of her death, she was just past thirty years of age.

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Many a man keeps his nose to the grindstone so that his wife can turn hers up at the neighbors.

*Anon.*

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You may not be able to learn something new, but there are people in the world who can teach you something old.

# pre-marriage clinic

## Conditions for "Blind" Dates

Donald F. Miller, C.S.S.R.

**P**ROBLEM: I have a girl-friend who has not been raised as strictly as I have been, but she is a good girl. We are both eighteen. Every once in a while she calls me and offers me a chance to go out with her and two fellows whom she says she knows but whom I have never met before. My mother never permits me to go on such dates, always saying that no decent girl should ever go out on a blind date. What is wrong with such blind dating? How am I going to meet different fellows if I don't accept such dates once in a while?

**S**OLUTION: There is always an element of danger in blind dating, and your mother is right in objecting to them whenever you have no more information about the persons involved than seems to have been given in the cases mentioned above.

This does not mean, and I doubt that your mother would disagree with me, that under no circumstances should a girl ever go out with a man whom she has never met. When certain conditions are present, the dangers of blind dating are sufficiently lessened to make it not imprudent. The principal conditions are these:

1. That you know that the person inviting you to go out on a blind date — in this case your girl-friend — has sound moral sense and sufficient prudence not to be picked up by just anybody who comes along. You admit that your girl-friend has not been raised as strictly as you have. Could not that mean that she

might be quite free and easy in getting acquainted with perfect strangers? How could you know that she did not pick up these "two friends" on a street corner or in a tavern or on a bus or streetcar? The very fact that her standards are lower than yours makes it imprudent for you to get involved in her double dates.

2. That the one who offers you a blind date be able and willing and truthful enough to tell you where and how the persons were met, and at least a little bit about their background. In other words, you have an obligation to reduce the blindness with which you go on a date as much as you possibly can. Otherwise you might find yourself going out with a married man, or a divorced man, or a rake looking for an easy mark. On the other hand, if your girl-friend can tell you that she met these two boys or men under respectable circumstances, with an opportunity to learn at least a little bit about their families, their work, their friends, you would not be entirely blind in going out on a date with them.

**W**HEN you cannot be given any definite information about the type of men your girl-friend wants you to double-date with her, your mother is eminently prudent in not letting you rush out to meet them. Even when you can be given information about the persons, your mother would be wise in insisting that your girl-friend invite them to come to your house for an evening, where they can meet your mother and father and family, before there is any outside dating.

# SIDEGLANCES

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By the Bystander

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THE Bystander returns this month to a topic that has been treated often in THE LIGUORIAN, in a manner that continues to bring in a flow of letters from people who disagree with the position taken. It is the subject of right-to-work laws. Perhaps the easiest way to try to reach common ground with the objectors is to summarize their letters in the form of questions, and then to answer the questions as objectively as possible.

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*Why are you against right-to-work laws, when you must know that a man's right to work is one of his most sacred privileges because it is a necessary support for his very right to life?*

We are against right-to-work laws because they are fraudulent in name and deceptive in intent.

*What do you mean by "fraudulent" in name?*

We mean that right-to-work laws do not give to any man a right to work at any job, in any plant, in any locality, or for any particular employer. Wherever right-to-work laws have been passed, men who need work are under the same necessity as they were

## More about Right-to-Work Laws

before to look for work and to ask an employer for work, and under the same dependence on an employer's willingness to hire them as they were before. The name of these laws is cleverly designed to make people think that they will guarantee a man's right to a certain job. Actually, they do no such thing. They leave a man just where he was before in regard to jobs: dependent on the willingness of others to hire him.

*What do you mean when you say that such laws are deceptive in intent?*

Practically all the state right-to-work laws that have been passed or proposed have substantially the same wording: "The right of a person to seek, obtain or retain employment shall not be abridged because of membership or non-membership in any labor organization." Thus it is made to appear that such laws are aimed at enlarging the freedom of the individual worker. The truth is that they are aimed at weakening and ultimately destroying the natural right of workers to bargain collectively and effectively with their employers about wages, conditions of employment, grievances,

etc. The real purpose of the right-to-work laws is to hand over to employers the unilateral right to decide by themselves on the wages an employee shall receive and the conditions under which he shall labor.

*Do you mean to say that no employer could be trusted to pay decent wages and to establish reasonable working conditions for his employees, if these matters were left to his judgment alone?*

We say no such thing. There have always been employers, and today there are more than ever before, who wanted to do the very best they could by their employees. But, under the pressures of the so-called profit motive, and especially under the necessity of battling for survival in a fiercely competitive atmosphere, it is always necessary that workingmen have a voice and be given a hearing in respect to their basic rights as human beings. There was a time when they had no such voice, and every student of history knows that at that time starvation wages were paid, unreasonably long hours of toil were demanded of employees, child labor was exploited, and many other evils prevailed.

*Do you mean to say that the formation of unions was more responsible for the bettering of the condition of the working man than the growing enlightenment and good will of employers?*

We say so emphatically, and we

think that anybody who has lived through or studied the economic events of the past 50 years will have to agree. We do not say that the formation of unions was the only cause of improvement in the lot of workingmen. Many other factors were involved: federal and state legislation, enlightenment of employers, the fear and danger of Communism, the necessity of combatting cycles of depression, the writings of popes and of both clerical and secular promoters of social justice — all these played a part in bringing about what Pope Leo XIII called the "reconstruction of society," in America. But the formation of unions, and the recognition of labor's right to bargain collectively with employers, were the practical means without which all the other factors would have had little effect.

*Let's get down to the basic issue. I believe in unions and accept the fact that they have improved the lot of the workingman. But I don't believe in compulsory unionism. I don't believe in the closed or union shop. I believe that a man should be free to join a union or not to join a union when he takes a job anywhere in the United States. This is the only freedom that right-to-work laws guarantee. Why do you oppose giving this freedom to workingmen?*

First, let's get the facts straight. Under the Taft-Hartley law, now the law of the land, which sanctions the union shop, no worker

in any plant is compelled to join the union that has a contract between employers and employees in that plant. No employee can be discharged from the plant for not joining the union. Each employee is bound only, when taking a job in a plant that has a "union shop," to pay the dues of a union member as his contribution to the collective bargaining process. The Supreme Court of the United States has stated that "Congress withheld from unions the power to cause the discharge of employees for any other reason than when employees are unwilling to contribute their fair share of the financial support of the union." Therefore the phrase "compulsory unionism" is a bugaboo created by the promoters of the right-to-work laws. It is a part of the fraud.

*I still think it unjust and contrary to a man's freedom that he should even have to contribute to a union when he takes a job in a certain plant. Why not let him decide that for himself?*

For the simple reason that every "free-rider" who would be permitted to take a job in a plant governed by a union shop agreement would weaken the collective-bargaining power of the rest of the workers, invite the employer to hire more and more free-riders, and eventually put back into the hands of the employer the absolute power to decide on wages and working conditions as he pleased. Thus the so-called free-

dom of the individual not to pay dues to the union would result in the destruction of the freedom of other employees to bargain collectively with their employers. The latter freedom is much more important than the former in today's industrial world.

*What you say is reasonable in theory, but it loses all its force by reason of the fact that practically all unions in the United States today are governed by racketeers and mobsters. No workingman should be forced to contribute to the continuation in office of thugs and Communists. Read the papers and you will see that there are practically no clean unions.*

Anyone who gets a universal statement like the above out of the newspapers cannot be argued with reasonably. Crime, whether committed by millionaires or socialites or juvenile delinquents or union leaders, makes news; virtue, except in its most heroic manifestations, rarely rates a line of publicity. Thus wicked union leaders receive plenty of space when their nefarious deeds are brought to light; but it is an insult and a slander against 15 million union men in the United States to draw the conclusion that they are all dominated and cowed by evil bosses.

It is true that there are columnists like Westbrook Pegler who have nothing good to say for any union, nor even for the principle of unionism; but a massive volume of fact and evidence reveals

such critics to have a congenital blind spot on this subject. They are just as unreliable as individuals who can see no good in the medical profession, or as Communists who can see no good in the ownership of private property.

*Must you not admit, though, that unions have become too powerful, too arbitrary, too dictatorial today, and that the time has come to put brakes on the exercise of their power by some such measures as right-to-work laws?*

The prosperity levels of the past several years, and the profit reports of most corporations in the United States do not indicate that the strength of unions has done great harm to the American economy. It is true that there has been considerable inflation, but the responsibility for this cannot be pinned solely on wage raises that unions have secured. Price-raising by producers, not always of necessity, must share the blame.

If unions have attained and begun to exercise a degree of power that is dangerous to the welfare of America, the remedy is not to be sought in the destruction of unions. That, we believe, and the record of history bears us out, is the secret aim of the National Association of Manufacturers in promoting right-to-work laws. These laws can readily be a preliminary to the re-introduction of the infamous "Yellow Dog" contracts that employees were forced to sign when taking a job in the first dec-

ade of this century, according to which the employee had to agree never to join a union while exercising his "right to work" for a certain employer. The return of Yellow Dog contracts of employment will be the beginning of the end of collective bargaining.

FOR the correction of the abuses of union power, inevitable at times in so widespread a movement, embracing as it does good and bad men, Christian and non-Christian, ignorant and informed, selfish and unselfish, there are plenty of agencies in America. There are federal and state governments, even though these are often in danger of being influenced more by the desires and ambitions of the big-money men than mere workers or impartial observers; there are federal bureaus, the courts, the influence of the good men in the union movement, and the constant flow of publicity given by sideline but watchdog observers. Where abuses come to light, they should be dealt with as abuses, not as a reason for first weakening and then destroying the good and necessary and natural right of collective bargaining that belongs to workers.

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Things could be a lot worse, states the *Minneapolis Tribune*. You can still read the other fellow's paper over his shoulder, park at a meter on what's left of his nickel and get through a revolving door on his push.

# Code of Catholic Conduct

## The Pew To Be Occupied at Mass

Ernest F. Miller, C.SS.R.

THE old days are gone when pews were assigned to families. Renting a pew was almost like renting a house. Once you got your name on a pew, the pew was yours for good and all. When you or any member of your family came to Mass on Sunday, you or he or she occupied the family pew and no other.

Nowadays one may go to any pew that has a vacancy in the church. This leads to abuses, particularly with men.

Why is it that men, not all men, but many men, cling to the rear of the church as though they were afraid that the church would catch on fire any minute and they had to be ready for a quick escape? What are they afraid of? Women are not inclined to be like men in this regard.

Pastors of parishes have tried to break men of this strange habit in many different ways. It seldom works merely to tell the men to get away from the walls and the last pews and to move near the front of the church. Tricks have to be used.

Thus, one priest announced from the pulpit that if it was the door that the men wanted to be near, he would be happy to oblige them by putting a door behind the high altar. In that way they could be near both the high altar where our Lord lived, and the door through which they desired to escape at the first possible moment when the Mass was finished.

Another pastor announced that he was thinking seriously of putting up a sign in the church that the last few pews and the spaces along the rear walls would henceforth be reserved for public adulterers,

horsethieves, bank robbers and kidnappers of babies.

Such facetious warnings should not be necessary.

No man, no woman should hesitate to occupy a pew at Mass near the middle or even in the front of the church. For one who believes in the presence of God on the altar, the place that is closest to the altar is the best place. St. Teresa says that the sheep nearest the shepherd are always the ones that are the best fed.

To stay away from the altar while Mass is going on is to repeat the performance of the apostles on the afternoon of the crucifixion. Only one apostle, St. John, had the courage to approach close to the cross and to remain there until our Lord died. All the rest of the apostles were in ditches and behind trees, afar off, afraid to come too near to their suffering Master lest they be committed to a task that might demand sacrifice and suffering.

Probably that is the trouble with the men who cling to the rear walls of the church during Mass. They're afraid that they may commit themselves to unsavory tasks if they approach too close to the altar where they can be seen. They do not want to be seen.

This is unfortunate. Maybe these men will not be seen, at least maybe they will not be known when they stand before the Lord to be judged. There is something in the Bible to the effect that on the last day God is going to say to some people, "I know you not." Could these words be a reference to the men who seldom really

get *inside* the church, who always are far removed from the altar during the mystical death of Christ? Perhaps.

**A**NOTHER suggestion about the pew to be occupied in church is this. A man makes a mistake who takes his place at the end of a pew and refuses to move over, so that all those coming in after him have to climb over him in order to reach their place. This is uncharitable. If

the people climbing over him become angry and even use some bad words, the man at the end of the pew is in some way responsible. Let him move over when he comes into a pew. In that way he will keep the peace.

This last paragraph applies to women as well as to men. Perhaps it applies to women a bit more particularly than to men.

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## Thoughts for the Shut-in

### For the Month of Mary

**W**ITH the least bit of sentiment in his disposition, any shut-in can find great comfort in the joyous realities and associations of the month of May. It is the one month of the year in which it is easiest to hope, easiest to dream, easiest to find reasons for happiness despite the hardships and trials that may have become a routine part of one's life.

Fair weather warms the heart during the month of May. The windows can be thrown open to the breezes from the south. There is a smell of fresh growing things in the air. A wave of perfume from lilacs or fruit blossoms floats through the window. People take to strolling during May, and oftener than usual stop to pass a few moments with a shut-in relative or friend. They bring with them bunches of flowers or blossoms or bouquets of stately tulips or early lilies, and these seem to bring the springtime right into one's room. Depression and discouragement are hard put to resist the warmth and hopefulness of May.

The religious associations of the month are even more heart-warming, for men and women of faith, than the natural and temporal. May is the month of Mary, the Mother of God. Special devotions are

held in her honor in almost all Catholic churches. Beautiful processions wind through college and seminary grounds, through churches and chapels, in which her picture or statue is carried in honor and crowned with the prettiest flowers of the season, and in which the Mother of God is acclaimed in familiar hymns of exquisite simplicity and beauty.

**I**N THE memory of such things, if he has ever experienced them, or in the thought of them as the scenes are related to him, the shut-in should find fond sentiments of love for Mary stirring in his heart, and in such sentiments comfort and peace.

The shut-in should ask the members of his family or his relatives or friends to let the whole month of May, natural and supernatural, enter his room by placing an altar or shrine to the Mother of God there. With its sweet-smelling flowers and bright sprigs of green, it will transport the shut-in to the open fields, the blooming gardens, the blue skies and the balmy air. With its image of Mary and its inspiration to prayer, such a shrine, even the most simple, will make him a part of the universal devotion of May to the Mother of God.

# THE GRADUATE

ERNEST F. MILLER, C.SS.R.

HERE was only one reason why the mother refused to send her little daughter to the Catholic school, and that one reason was the fear she had of the busy street corner that lay between her home and the Catholic school. The child would have to cross that corner in order to get to the Catholic school. There was no such corner between her home and the public school. And so, even though the public school was farther away than the Catholic school and the child would have to walk a greater distance in consequence, the public school was chosen. After all, thought the mother, there wasn't too great a difference between the two schools anyway. Why all the fussing and fretting and making an issue of the thing?

Without a doubt the corner in question carried a heavy load of traffic at all times; it was never free from the whirring and the whining of passing cars, and therefore presented a certain element of danger, especially to a child.



The parish priest called on the woman.

The purpose of the visit was not to enter into argumentation with the woman or to condemn and criticize

It seemed incredible that a street corner could have such strange power over the mind of a woman. Was the corner actually alive, possessing the power of prohibiting certain people from crossing it? It seemed like that.

her in such a way as to antagonize and embitter her. It was his duty as pastor of the parish to which she belonged to inform her of the serious law of the Church demanding that parents send their children to a Catholic school unless they had a grave reason whereby they were excused from the law and were able to make provision in some other way for the religious training that the children would have received in the parochial school.

Did she have such a grave reason?

It hardly seemed likely in view of the fact that not only was there a traffic light at the dangerous corner, but a policeman also was in attendance at those times, morning and evening, when the children were wont to cross over. The children never had to negotiate the corner by themselves.

Surely some training was necessary from early years in the recognition of danger, some practice was needed in the avoiding of danger and some self-reliance had to be instilled

if the child was to receive a complete education. But lest the danger be unreasonable, a policeman would always be on hand to keep a careful watch. Where was the difficulty?

The woman was adamant. She would not change her mind.

This was her only child. She had been forbidden or at least strongly advised by a doctor not to have any more children. Children made her nervous. One was about all she could handle. It was because of that decision — not to have any more children — that her husband left her. He was cruel beyond words in expecting her to go through the pain of having children when really she didn't want to go through the pain at all. What did he think she was?

**S**O HE left her, and now she was alone with the child. Her child was all she had. Of course the priest could not understand that. He could hardly know what so intense a love meant. Otherwise he would not ask a mother to put her child in mortal danger only to go to a certain school in preference to another school when in the final analysis both schools taught in substance the very same things.

**I**N THIS she was mistaken. The priest understood full well what he was asking. His cassock in covering his body did not cover it to the point of destroying his human feelings. He knew what she was going through. And he grieved with her. Even so, he still suggested that the child be sent to the Catholic school. Why?

May, 1957

Because the public school concentrated primarily on the mind and the body. The Catholic school went one step farther. It concentrated on the mind and body of the child, but also on the soul. The soul was the thing that counted because the soul lived forever either in happiness or in pain depending on the kind of life that was led on earth. The Catholic school made every effort to teach the child the right kind of life, the kind of life that would lead to happiness in heaven. The Catholic school was set up to save the soul as well as build up the body and improve the mind.

The priest was interested in the child's soul. He wanted to be sure that the child would go to heaven. He wanted the mother and the daughter to be together in heaven for all eternity. Couldn't the mother see this? Wasn't that what she desired too? Certainly she had heard often and believed in her heart that there were few expedients in existence better calculated to give a child a good start in the race for heaven than a Catholic school.

**A**T ANY rate, what satisfaction would there be for the mother if she preserved the health of her daughter's body for a long time but in so doing destroyed the health of the daughter's soul? Take the extreme case — suppose the child was killed while crossing the intersection. The mother would be certain that her beloved little daughter was in heaven waiting for her. She had accomplished the main purpose of her motherhood — she had given her child eternal life.

This last thing was the wrong thing to say. The priest knew it the moment the words fell from his lips. The only response he received was a flood of tears. Probably he had now wrecked his case entirely.

It would be understandable if the reason adduced for sending the child to a public school was sickness or an immense distance that had to be traveled or the absence of a Catholic school in the area. But that a street corner should be given the authority to sit in judgment on a child's life, of demanding that a child set no foot upon its surface, thereby preventing attendance at a Catholic school, of causing a mother to gamble with her child's immortal soul — this was unbelievable.

The priest retrieved his hat and departed. There was little more that he could say or do. The woman was determined not to listen, not to obey. She would take her guidance from the street corner, not from the Church. So be it. He had done the best he could.

Of course he knew quite well that the case was not yet completely closed, even though he was forced to step aside by his inability to effect a change in the woman's mind. God was the witness of the whole scene. The child was His child as well as the mother's. The mother had given only the body. He had given the soul and the life that made the soul an image of Himself. He was vitally interested in the child. He wanted no harm to come to the child's soul. It would be interesting to see what

steps, if any, He would take to have His will fulfilled or to show His anger because His will was not fulfilled. The priest knew that God's arm was long and His patience great.

+ + +

The little girl went to the public grade school; then to the public high school. At various times along the way the mother gave thought to making a change. But then why should she? All the girl's friends went to the public school. She had heard of a doctor or somebody who had said that it could hurt a teen-ager's psychological development to be asked to make all new friends just at a time in life when she needed a feeling of security. The mother surely would not want to hurt her daughter's psychological development. The change was not made. After high school the girl went to the state university.

The priest did not call upon the mother again. Nor did the mother go out of her way to call upon the priest. God continued to witness it all.

Time passed and two things began to happen.

THE fear of the dangerous corner near her house gradually left the mind of the mother. For a long time the intersection bothered her, reproached her so that each time she was on or near it she felt depressed. She knew that it was nothing more than her imagination, but the place seemed to mock her. A sort of chill would come upon her and she would have to hasten away.

Now, however, with her daughter well advanced in college, the corner,

though still as busy and as traffic-choked as ever, lost its power to frighten. It became just another crowded and car-packed bottle-neck in the city. It may have been a barrier in the past, too broad and too high for a child to surmount; now it was only a bothersome burden.

The second thing that happened was this, that some place, either in the public grade school or the public high school or the state university, the fine polish of the girl's faith began to wear off. She was a good girl. There was no doubt about that. She went to Mass on Sunday and kept from meat on Friday. But other things were not as they should have been.

The fact of her keeping company in her last year at college with a young man not of her faith and who would have nothing to do with an investigation of her faith worried the mother not a little. Strange that it should worry the mother. But it did. Worried or not, there was nothing she could do about it. The girl was grown up. In fact she was just three months away from graduation from the university.

Finally the day of graduation came.

It was a proud day for the mother. Her girl was graduating almost at the top of her class. She was beautiful. She was extremely popular. She would make her mark in the world and she would bring her mother along with her. Nothing but happiness and success stretched out in front of both of them. They had

worked hard. Now they would be rewarded. The mother had been wise in taking the stand she did. That stand was about to pay off.

The graduation ceremony was over. Mother and daughter were driving home. In order to get home they had to pass the busy corner. It was no problem to pass it now. The latest in traffic equipment had been installed. In fact, if one caught the green light at the right time, one could move through without lessening the speed of the car, as though there were no busy corner there at all.

**T**HE mother was driving the car. Her daughter was at her side in the front seat. The light seemed to be green. The mother did not slow down. But something went wrong. The light changed. Cars on the other street surged forward. In the very middle of the intersection it happened. There was a crash, a scream, a grinding and a sliding as cars were knocked this way and that. Then all was silent.

The extent of the tragedy was clear to the mother before anyone told her. This was retribution. This was being struck down by the very weapon that one had forged to save oneself. The young woman was lying on her back on the pavement. She lay perfectly still. There were no visible marks upon her, no gushing of blood, no twisted or contorted arms or legs. But she was dead. The mother knew that. And she knew that she could do nothing about it.

The mother was not hurt at all. But she was powerless. She still sat behind the wheel of the car and stared down at her daughter on the pavement. The immensity of the calamity slowly seeped into her numbed and tortured mind. This was the end, the last chapter in the book, the dropping of the curtain. This was another world into which she had been suddenly thrown. There was a sense of unreality about it all. A moment ago she was in a world of bright reality, filled with promise for the future. And now. . . . She had built so well, with such effort, with such single-mindedness. She might just as well have built a house of cards.

In a few minutes there was a priest kneeling at the side of the girl. He anointed her with the holy oil. She was dead. But perhaps there was one tiny spark of life still left in that quiet body. Perhaps the sacrament would find a place to lodge and do its work of spiritual cleansing and repairing. He prayed that it would be so.

AND as he prayed, the mother watched. And as she watched, the truth of what had happened came upon her. The street corner had nothing to do with it at all. It was God and God alone. He had allowed this to happen. He had only used the corner as a blackboard on which to write and teach the lesson of His justice. He had waited until now to let the mother know that she who does not build on Christ, builds in vain.

She had not built on Christ when she built the future of her daughter. She had listened to no one but herself. She had acted as though her daughter belonged to herself alone and to no one else, not even to God. God showed her her mistake on the very spot where the disobedience was consummated and at the very time when it seemed as though she had been successful—on the day of graduation.

Oh, why had she not listened to the priest those many years ago when he had been so kind to call upon her and tell her what was good for her and for her daughter! Now it was too late. For the first time the tears gushed from her eyes and her body was torn with convulsive sobs.

People standing by looked on curiously and with pity. Automobile horns honked. Cars were lined up for blocks on both sides of the accident. Men and women were anxious to be on their way. This accident meant nothing to them. They could read about it in the evening paper. Their problem was to get going. They had things to do, places to go. Why didn't the police get on the job!

A few minutes more and the line began to move. Faster and faster. The whir and the whine of passing cars. Almost like a chant, a moan, a constantly repeated sign. The corner once more was in command.

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The ability to speak several languages is valuable, but the ability to keep your mouth shut in one language is more valuable.

*Selected*



# readers retort

In which readers are invited to express their minds on articles and opinions published in *The Liguorian*. Letters must be signed and full address of the writer must be given, though city and name will be withheld from publication on request.

## Anonymous Letters

• *Very often individuals write to us asking for advice on a marriage case or on some intimate personal problem, not signing their names or giving their address, but asking us to publish the answer to their particular problem in THE LIGUORIAN. We cannot promise to give personally directed answers to such problems in our printed pages. Prudence has to guide us in what is published, together with the intent of helping many persons at the same time. If, however, any reader writes to ask for a solution to a personal moral problem, we shall always write a personal letter in reply, provided the person gives his name and address; otherwise the letter-writing is wasted time and effort.*

The editors

## The Single Life

"I just received a shipment of LIGUORIAN pamphlets for the parish bookrack. Among the pamphlets was TEEN-AGERS AND SINGLE LIFE. This is the finest short article on a subject which in my opinion is either slighted or ignored by preachers and writers. I once heard a very fine priest, a teacher, make the statement that a fellow is better off married because he is a more responsible individual, easier to deal with and a better, well-rounded person in every way. This was said in the presence of several as yet single young

men and one older man who had remained unmarried and devoted his life to Catholic church music. I question the wisdom of such a statement when there are so many obvious exceptions. Unfortunately this excellent priest was expressing an attitude that is all too common among clergy and laity. How many preachers do we hear talking on vocations as though there were only two: the married and the priesthood or the religious life? It is refreshing to read your words about the case of an older brother or sister financing the studies of a younger member of the family attending the seminary and the case of the one who gives up marriage to look after her parents being a vocation with God setting up the circumstances. I often wonder if the high rate of divorce today might be in part due to the fact that many of these people should not have married in the first place. Though your booklet is entitled TEEN-AGERS AND SINGLE LIFE, I believe that it is one of value for those who like me are no longer teen-agers but like to feel that we don't have to keep up a pretense of being poor souls who did not get a chance for happiness while their friends are already married and are still hopefully waiting around until they get the chance to 'marry up' and lead 'complete lives.'

Toledo, Ohio

H. L. M."

## Our Thanks!

"Please do not become discouraged because of the criticism some of your readers write in. Your magazine is clear, concise and to the point. We have a great need of it in this day when thinking has become so blurred and the sense of right and wrong has become so dulled. People have lost their sense of what is sin and what is good. Please do not change your policy to suit anyone, but just keep on writing as you have done in the past. Your magazine is a spiritual and intellectual treat.

Dallas, Tex.

Mrs. N. E. L."

• *We should like to let our readers know that we receive many, many letters similar to the above letter. We cannot begin to publish even a representative number of them, but must limit ourselves to merely a sampling here and there. Our general policy in the READERS RETORT department is to publish letters which present a problem in connection with an article we have published, or which express disagreement with what we have written, so that many other readers, who may have the same need of further clarification will benefit by the letters and our answers. Many of the letters, also, are published to present the layman's view on questions or topics discussed in THE LIGUORIAN. We are grateful for this opportunity, however, to express our high appreciation of the favorable and commendatory letters we receive day after day. They are a splendid encouragement to us in our work of the apostolate of the printed word.*

The editors

## Invalidly Married Catholics

"I have just finished your article, 'How to Act toward Invalidly Married Catholics' in the March LIGUORIAN. Please tell me how my husband, 12-year-old daughter and I should act toward my mother who is a widow living with a divorced man? My brothers and sisters have

accepted the situation as if it were normal and visit back and forth with my mother as if nothing had happened. Shall I tell my 12-year-old daughter about her grandmother's spiritual state, and why we do not visit her and the man she is living with?

Utica, N.Y.

J. C. D."

• *It would be very wise, we think, to explain this situation to a 12-year-old daughter for the primary purpose of inspiring her to pray a great deal for her grandmother, and the secondary purpose of impressing upon her the sacredness of marriage. There is no doubt that young people often acquire a light outlook on the sacrament of marriage simply because their elders so easily take invalid marriages for granted. This is a case in which a young girl should, with the greatest charity, be told the facts, both to inspire prayers for her grandmother, and to let her know why the family does not visit her and the man she is living with.*

The editors

"Your article in the March LIGUORIAN, on 'How to Act toward Invalidly Married Catholics,' was most complete, yet it left me with a doubt about something my husband and I did a few months ago. A member of my husband's firm, Catholic, young, divorced, went through a wedding ceremony with a Protestant girl before a Protestant minister in her mother's home. My husband felt that because of his business association with the young man, it was necessary for us to attend. Accordingly we went to the out-of-town ceremony, stayed for the "wedding" breakfast, and gave the couple an expensive gift. Did we do wrong, and if so, have I been receiving the sacraments unworthily since that time?

N.N.

N. N."

• *Objectively it was wrong for you and your husband to attend the invalid wed-*

*ding ceremony and the breakfast, and to give a present to the couple. I doubt that you committed a formal mortal sin because of your ignorance of the fact that by doing these things you were practically wishing the young Catholic well in his sinful life. It was just because so many Catholics do not realize the harm they do by attending such "weddings" that our article was written. We hope it will be quoted widely.*

The editors

### The Gradual Approach

"Thanks for the 'Questions about Racial Segregation' in THE LIGUORIAN. I have a question, however, that I want to ask you. One of our Sisters said in history class that we would never have had the trouble about segregation that we have today if we had brought about desegregation *gradually*. In your article you also say that 'prudence approves the *gradual* approach to desegregation. Do you really think that southern white people will stand still for *gradual* desegregation? If so, why did they rebel so quickly when Lincoln tried to do something about the situation? Are not most social goods brought about by some kind of force? I cannot agree, in such an important matter as desegregation, on the gradual approach.

Kansas City, Mo. Miss H. M. W."

- *The words "prudence" and "gradualness" have often been used by advocates of segregation as a cover-up for a do-nothing policy. We by no means use these words in that way. Prudence means using the right means at the right time in the right way to bring about racial justice; it means being on guard not to cause greater evils, by intemperate methods, than the one we wish to destroy. It does not mean compromise and sloth. Zeal for justice and prudence both require that we do something to right wrongs, but, because the free wills of human beings are involved, they recognize the need of a long range, gradual program. Tremendous pro-*

*gress has already been made in a prudent, gradual way.*

The editors

### Inter-racial Marriage

"I have been reading the letters and comments in THE LIGUORIAN on the subject of integration and other things involving the white and colored races. I am a white girl, and I am engaged to a Negro boy. I suppose if you print this there will be much comment — most of it against me — but I'd like to say what I think first. I believe that all human beings are of equal value in the eyes of God, and that no one of one race is by that fact better than somebody of a different race. God made us all and He intended us all to live together. We live but once and while we live we are bound to do God's will or to pay for it later. And surely some of the laws made in some states against a marriage like ours are not, I believe, the will of God. People tell us that, although we may get along all right, our children will suffer. I say, why will they? Children are what their parents make them. A child that is raised correctly with a knowledge of God and His laws and His Church will be better off than many very rich people who know nothing about God. I would like to know what is wrong with many people today. They act as though a Negro were some kind of disease, instead of a very important human being. How can we expect to get along with the people of other countries if we can't get along together in our own? We are setting the worst possible example to the world. I feel that a few mixed couples like ourselves can improve race relations in the world. My boy-friend is a Catholic and a better one than I am, even though I was raised a Catholic.

Minneapolis, Minn. Miss S. W."

- *We are not prophets, but we shall not be surprised if we are charged with encouraging, promoting, advising, aiding and*

*abetting inter-racial marriages by the publication of this letter. For the benefit of any reader who may feel impelled to that course of action we quote from the August, 1956, LIGUORIAN, page 452, where, in answer to the question, "So, you approve of inter-racial marriage?" we said: "We merely state this truth: inter-racial marriage is prohibited by no natural, divine or ecclesiastical (Catholic) law. The local civil laws forbidding such marriages, and the popular antipathy against them, are part of a heritage of prejudice." Since, in the past, we gave space to letters condemning inter-racial marriage (November issue, 1956) we believe that we should likewise give space to an expression of the opposite opinion.*

The editors

### Wife's Defense of Husbands

"I've been reading the letters from wives which you published about the "brute" of a husband who takes his poor little wife for granted, or about how he demands his marriage rights and how she has to work and slave and bear children. I'm so sick of listening to them that I feel I must reply. First, I want to defend the American husband. He is the most thoughtful, considerate, kind, generous, loving and constant in the world. So he's not as romantic as during their courtship. How can he be? After all, he's busy all day working hard to help make her life easier. Yes, I know she works hard all day, but at least she's her own boss. Second, I'm sick unto death listening to all this whining about how awful their husbands are in their sex life. I thought the Victorian attitude toward sex went out with Victoria. I just happen to love my husband and I thoroughly enjoy having my husband make love to me. If this makes me a freak, then at least I'm a happy one. I believe someone must defend our wonderful husbands. Almost every magazine one reads today is tearing them

apart. I, for one, want to build them up. I love, admire and respect them. Some women might say my husband is probably different. He's not. He takes me for granted and I'm flattered that he has so much faith and trust in me and that I am so much a part of him — a living part — that I am as natural to him as his breathing. My happiness is in making him happy. I know this sounds trite, and I confess that I often fail. I suppose what I'm trying so hard to say to some of these women is that true love asks nothing but gives all. The more you give freely, the more you get in return. No one can demand or command love.

Stillwater, Minn.

Mrs. P. A. S."

### Dirty Windows

"Your articles help me to be honest with myself for one thing — like a pail of ice water thrown in my face. A person can go along taking the line of least resistance in so many small ways that he really doesn't realize how much he has slipped until it is brought home to him in what may seem an unnecessarily plain-speaking article such as is found in THE LIGUORIAN. Nearly all human beings are inclined to be a little less than honest with themselves. We make excuses for everything we do wrong until we begin to believe the excuses ourselves. We think the rules are fine — for other people — 'but our case is different and surely God would understand, even though the priest doesn't.' We slip here and slide there — after all, we want to enjoy life, don't we? But we never realize how dusty we have become. It's like a housewife washing windows and saying, 'I had no idea they were so dirty until I started cleaning them. Look at the difference now!' I guess souls can get dusty too, and we have no idea how coated they have become until we try cleaning a spot here and there. We can learn to keep them clean or we can let them go because it 'isn't convenient'

at the present time and the neighbors' windows are even worse.' So I appreciate the way in which you go directly to the core of what you are discussing, with no sugar-coating to make it more palatable. You know human nature and the excuses we like to make to justify our actions, and with one sweep you clean them away so we can't hide behind them anymore. After the first shock we either see ourselves more clearly, or set about building another wall of excuses to hide behind, such as 'cancel my subscription — you don't know what you're talking about — my case is different and besides there is no need to be so outspoken — it shocks me!' Please continue just as you are. We need to be shocked now and then to be on our toes.

Hanover, Mich.

Mrs. L. P. T."

### Right to Work — and Unions

"I enjoy your magazine and have profited by your articles, especially on the racial problem. Being a Southerner, I feel that it will take a little time to get used to racial integration, but I know in my heart this is right as well as inevitable. However, there is one subject on which I am at complete variance with you, and that is the right-to-work laws. I would sincerely like an answer to this question. How can you reconcile equal opportunity of employment for everyone with the fact that, without a right-to-work law, it is mandatory for many people to belong to a union in order to obtain employment? I am against people being forced to join a union or go jobless. If the unions offer enough in return for their dues-dollars, they will certainly be able to attract numbers. I see nothing unjust, undemocratic or irreligious about right-to-work laws.

Baton Rouge, La.

B. C."

• *First of all, under the Taft-Hartley law, nobody can be forced to belong to a union BEFORE getting a job (with the exception of one or the other industry*

*governed by special rules for special reasons). The union shop, approved by the Taft-Hartley law, but against which right-to-work laws are aimed, merely demands that within a certain time AFTER a person gets a job in a certain industry, he then joins the union operating in that industry. Thus it is not mandatory, without right-to-work laws, for people to belong to unions in order to get employment. Secondly, we think that right-to-work laws can and inevitably will weaken good unions' bargaining power, eventually even destroy the unions. Before there were any strong and good unions, all workers had a "right" to compete with one another for jobs, with the result that wages went lower and lower as competition for jobs got more and more fierce. Thus they had "a right-to-work" anywhere they could land a job, but at subsistence and starvation wages. The unions changed that, and in general the level of wages is good today. We oppose right-to-work laws because they could take us back to the old system, and in due time workers would find that such laws only gave them a "right-to-work for starvation wages."*

The editors

### Kind Words

"Thank you very much for making such complete Catholic knowledge available to average people. Most of us never learn much more of our faith and practices than we did as children when we were in school. You have taught us much more, for which we are grateful.

Corona, N.Y.

Mrs. R.B."

"Just a note to thank you most sincerely for the subscription to THE LIQUORIAN. The first issue arrived this afternoon and I began an immediate devouring of its contents. The sooner I am through with it, the sooner I can start it on its way around the parish.

Zambales, Philippines Father J. D. G."

# COME ON TO COLLEGE!

**F**IGURES show that most students, when they have finished high school, call it quits and go no further in their education. Many high school students, however, do enter college, and it is encouraging to note that this number increases year by year. Some, indeed, go no further than the first or second year in college, but the line of college graduates grows longer each year as the total enrollment in colleges increases.

Why do so many high school graduates turn away from a college education? You might ask Gene, or Larry, or Gracie, or any typical high school graduate. The reasons are the same all over the country.

One reason, brought up by force of circumstances, is the military service.

A great number of boys, when they finish high school, want to get their period of service in the armed forces "over with." Added to this idea is the stress placed by the recruiting agencies on the many advantages offered by the various branches of the service for furthering education and particularly technical training.

In not a rare case, you find a boy who sees in the military service a refuge. Coming from a broken home, he has had to scrounge for his food and recreation, and as a consequence has been plagued with a sense of in-

At this time of the year many seniors in high school are faced with the question: should they go on to college after graduation? Here are some reflections to help them make a decision.

security. He knows that in the military he will have a sense of belonging and a possibility of developing himself.

**T**HE most common and at the same time the most urgent reason why young people do not go to college is the urge of going to work. They feel that their parents and others in the family have carried them through the years of high school and now since they are old enough to work they feel it a duty to get out and support themselves. Added to this are the attractive high wages that can be obtained in many lines of employment. Many a young man has longed for the day when he can have money to jangle in his pocket and to make the down payment on a car.

Another popular reason for not going to college is that a young man or young lady, after finishing high school, is "just too tired of studying." It is the same argument as that of the youngster who just doesn't

want to go to school. That argument is sometimes hard to overcome; but this particular difficulty can be surmounted if parents will, with patience and prudence, help their son or daughter to do some straight thinking.

We find another reason that is not generally put into words. It is the inferiority complex about going to college. This complex develops in the student who has had difficulty in making the necessary grades in high school studies. Any student will be able to make the grades in college classes if he has applied himself to his full ability in high school; in fact, he will find his college studies proportionately less difficult because he will discover that his strenuous efforts in trying to make the grade in high school have built for him habits of study and application that will pay dividends when he goes to college.

**W**HATEVER may be the reason for not going to college, every young man and woman recently graduated from high school should at least seriously consider the matter of a higher education in college. The day is fast approaching when a high school education will not be sufficient to obtain even an ordinary well-paying job.

There are instances, it is true, in which a person who had no more than an elementary education, or even less, has by constant and diligent work advanced himself to a high position in a company or industry. However, in the day when he began to work, a high school education was

not as common as it is now. Today the chief executives in a firm will not advance an employee until they have closely scrutinized his high school record and his record of employment. If that record is good, and if he has had a college education, he will very likely be the man whom they promote to a higher position.

Aside from the possibility of self-advancement in a line of work, a college education opens up opportunities in other fields. Scientists are the demand of the hour, and there are almost unlimited fields in which a scientist can apply himself in specialized research. Some industries are ready to subsidize promising students in special avenues of research with the hope that they will discover new products, which will enable the industries to branch out in new lines. Not only the field of scientific research, but many other professions—law, teaching, politics, statesmanship, journalism — are opened up by a basic college education.

As the number of college graduates increases, the intellectual level of the community and the nation as a whole rises; the standards of cultural development are elevated, and there is a finer appreciation of arts and manners.

**G**OING to college requires a greater sacrifice than going to high school. The intensity of the study is great and the demands are rigid. A student knows that he has to produce his work or drop out. There is not, in college, the carefree "make me do it if you can" attitude of high

school days. When faced with this fact the disinterested student will be inclined to give up.

College days are also the time of life when young men in particular develop the desire of doing something toward establishing themselves securely in life; and as they sit in the lecture room hour after hour, the prospect of four years of study assumes the proportions of an eternity. Then the temptation is great to give up studying and to go out and find a job — a job of any kind. College life is a school of endurance and perseverance, and it is the strong of heart and will and mind who survive and who get started on the way to a well-balanced and successful life. This experience is a part of the education for life which contributes immeasurably to making a truly successful man.

Logical and persuasive reasons can be brought up in favor of the high school graduate's attending college, but there still remains a final and sometimes insurmountable obstacle: that is the question, "Where will I get the money?" This question has been answered by countless numbers now bearing college degrees who had less money than the young people asking that question today. They answered it by finding work to do. There are those who will say that they have looked and can find no work. Perhaps the work they could not find is the high-paying, easy-hours type of work that they dream about. There is work to be done, and it can be found by those who really have the ambition to work their way through college. Others have done it, and the same opportunity awaits the willing-to-work high school graduate today.

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#### HOW LAZY ARE YOU?

One form of laziness is that of the man who spends most of his time doing the wrong things; who spends as little time as possible doing the things he is in duty bound to do. Thus a father of a family may work hard at his golf, at preparing for his fishing trips, at activities connected with some fraternity or club to which he belongs, while he neglects the work of making a decent living for his family. Or, a mother may dash about busily on club work or social activities, while she leaves her home in a state of constant confusion and disorder. Both are lazy; they are dodging their responsibilities; they are weak and flabby characters.

Another form of laziness is that in which a person easily gives up a task that requires perseverance. Victims of this kind of laziness are they who are constantly changing jobs and looking for something easier to do; who get halfway through a job and then let it remain unfinished while they turn their attention to something more pleasant than work; who are always looking for something to turn up while they live in uncleanliness and disorder that could be easily cleared up by a little earnest toil.

Let those who neglect primary duties, or who seldom persevere at a job, take note of their weakness before they slip silently into the class of genteel vagabonds.

# For Men Who Never Made a Retreat

**T**HERE are thousands like you. Every time someone suggests a week end at a monastery you shudder. No sooner do you hear the word retreat than your imagination starts grinding out vista-vision shots of bald monks sneaking a pinch of wormwood into your soup, or of some ancient wishing you a good night's sleep on a board. And what's more, you know you're going to lie awake waiting for the old monk to return with a scourge.

Or maybe you take a more realistic approach. These whips and boards, you decide, are relics of the days of St. Francis and his kind. The mixer for the modern retreat is misery. You check your smiles at the grating and then work up a sweat trying to keep quiet for two or three days.

Or maybe you don't take any approach at all. You just shudder at the mention of the word *retreat*.

Well, you know, a lot of people are smiling at you — at least 400,000 of them. They've tried a week end at a retreat house and they know your ideas are far out of focus. There is nothing medieval about a retreat: no gloom, no misery. Retreat masters understand the lay per-

EDWARD FINNEGAN, C.S.S.R.

son's difficulties in modern life and give help in line with that understanding. You are helped to live *your* life better.

**W**HAT is a closed retreat? Basically, it is getting away from the world to give your spiritual needs all the time and thought they deserve. You can make a retreat alone, but more usually you join in with others and take the direction of a retreat master. On Friday evening you can step into one of the 159 retreat houses. From then until Sunday afternoon — forty hours — you follow a full schedule of spiritual exercises.

That's fine, you say, but you're just an ordinary guy. Every workday you squeeze into a subway or bus at seven-thirty. You spend the day keeping pace with a machine. Then in the evening the same subway or bus spits you out at your home, a few dollars richer, but much more tired. You take supper, talk for a while, watch TV and then off to bed. When the week end turns up you like to spend it with your family — have a good time. This retreat idea sounds fine, but after a week at the factory

or office you deserve a rest and a couple of days with your family.

You're right; you do deserve the relaxation, and your family deserves to have you around. But this retreat turns up only once a year. There are good reasons for sacrificing a week end to make a retreat. First, you owe it to God; second, you owe it to your family; and third, you owe it to yourself.

### YOU OWE IT TO GOD

SUPPOSE I told you about a friend who plunged deeply into his bank account to buy a new Cadillac. . . . He has a theory about the car. Every Saturday he's going to polish it till he sees his face in it. But the motor — no one's going to touch that. Cadillacs are the best on the road, he figures, so come what may, he's never going to open that hood. Leave the insides alone — that's his policy — just keep the outside sparkling.

He's crazy, you say. He might get away with his leave-the-motor-alone policy for a while, but someday — wham! — he's going to pay for it — and maybe with his life. And it won't make a bit of difference then how many cans of polish he's rubbed on it. In a car, what counts is the motor!

But you do something very much the same!

God gave man a body and a soul. How often have you heard that? And didn't our Lord say: "How is a man better for it, if he gains the whole world at the cost of losing his own soul? For a man's soul, what price

can be high enough?" The soul is much more important than the body.

Of course, you never doubted that. But answer one question for yourself — honestly: when was the last time you sat down and really thought about your soul? You examined your conscience before confession recently, but that only took a few minutes or so. When was the last time you gave your soul all the time it deserves? When was the last time — with real honest-to-goodness actions and not mere pious thoughts — you showed God that you know your soul is much more precious than your body?

The Cadillac owner was crazy, you said. Don't you see any resemblance?

You think a great deal about your body. You spend hour after hour polishing the exterior. I mean the things that are not directly concerned with your soul. Your job, for instance, or your new house. Or, most of all, your family. It's not wrong to bother about these things. No more than it was wrong for the man to polish his Cadillac. But you admitted your soul was more important than your body. Yet there's no comparison in the time you spend on each.

What was it you said? My friend might get along for a while with his foolhardy ideas, but then someday — wham! — he's going to pay for it. And maybe with his life. . . . You might get along ignoring your soul for a while — but then someday. . . . And maybe you'll pay for it for all eternity..

**T**HEN, too, count the hours you've listened to the advertisers of the flesh — on TV, in the movies, at your job. How do they measure up to the hours you've listened to God! Isn't that selling God short? He has much to say to you: things far more important than the babble of these men of the world, and counting much more for your happiness. Won't you ever stop to listen?

### **YOU OWE IT TO YOUR FAMILY**

**W**E mentioned your family as one of your temporal concerns. But that was looking at only one side. They should also be one of your spiritual concerns. Their most important job, like yours, is saving their souls. In working to get them the "better things of life" you can forget the best thing — the thing that will remain after all the others are gone and forgotten. Now they will thank you for the luxury and pleasure; for helping them to save their souls, they will thank you for all eternity. If you let them down, they may blame you for all eternity.

This, of course, isn't an easy job. Only a fool would say it is. But it has to be done all the same.

If you take time to think over their material needs — the things that rust and wither, why not take time to think about the needs of their souls? Why not a retreat?

Also, you owe it to your family to check up on your faults. A painter always backs away from his canvas to criticize: to see how the details fit into the whole: to make sure

that a slight bend in the lip hasn't changed a grin to a grimace. Caught in the whirl of bread-winning you forget how the details can make or wreck the family picture. You come home and forget to notice the wife has a new dress on, or that, with a good deal of rubbing, she's made the furniture a few years younger. She resents the neglect. And you throw up your arms in disgust and then stomp out to the local bar. Oh, you'll be able to give one of the boys a hundred arguments why the little woman is wrong. But you're like a painter who keeps his nose to the canvas. If you would only step back, you would see that a dab here or a dab there — not much trouble at all — will change that grimace to a grin. You'd see that the little details you ignore ruin the whole picture, details you can touch up with only half an effort. After all, painters only make images of life; you're working on the real thing. It's only reasonable — and can mean only happiness to your family — to step back and criticize. Now you tell me: what's the best way to "step back?"

### **YOU OWE IT TO YOURSELF**

**I**N PAYING the debts you owe to God and your family, you yourself have indirectly gained. But in a retreat there are some benefits that come *especially* to you. . . .

You will deepen your faith. It will draw you near to the fire; you can't help but become warm. You will realize more strongly that God is not a Sunday-God, demanding lip service one day — then ignoring you for

the rest of the week. Just as the deepness of your love for your wife at times dawns on you, so also will come the realization that with every single step you take, God is with you, loving and protecting you. And with that realization will come peace and security.

You will grow to understand that the doctrines of your religion are not vague speculations, but God's plans for your believing and doing. You will find a new satisfaction and happiness within you because at last you have really begun to taste your religion.

And then there's the benefit that all the old-timers talk about: a personal talk with a priest. How often

have you thought of talking things over with a priest and yet never did so because you thought he was too busy, or because you never found that "convenient" time to go to the rectory. At a retreat you will get the time to talk to a priest. You will find that the priest — an expert in spiritual matters — is only too glad to talk things over with you.

And, most important of all, you will gain graces to live your life better. God has always rewarded His loved ones a hundredfold. You will be no exception. The sacrifice of a week end will come back to you again and again — in strength to resist sin, in the power to do more for God.

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#### MISTAKEN IDENTITY

When a large group of seminarians from the Maryknoll Novitiate in Bedford, Mass., attended a baseball game in Fenway Park, Boston, they were conspicuous in the crowd because of their dark clothes.

One puzzled man, after many glances at their black suits, white shirts, and black ties, finally asked:

"Say, are you fellows studying to be umpires?"

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#### IF YOU CHANGE YOUR ADDRESS

Please notify us promptly of your change of address, giving both your old and new address. It makes it easy for our office if you cut your stenciled address from the rear cover of one of your issues of THE LIGUORIAN and send it in when asking for a change of address. Notify us by the tenth of the month if your copy for that month has not been delivered.

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#### LIGUORIAN BINDERS

We have had hard-cover binders made to order for holding 12 copies of THE LIGUORIAN in a single volume. Anyone can insert the issues in the binder. Those who preserve their copies of THE LIGUORIAN for reference will find the binders very handy, with the index always at the end of the December issue. Order binders from THE LIGUORIAN, Liguori, Mo., at \$2.50 each.

# POINTED PARAGRAPHS

## Marriage Annulments from Rome

It is unfortunate that year after year a clarification such as follows has to be made. But every year wrong judgments based on mis-information continue to be made about the work of the Roman Rota, which is the highest marriage court in the Catholic Church. The old lies never seem to die, and Catholics themselves sometimes unthinkingly repeat them. We mean such charges as this: "Anybody can get a marriage annulled, if he has enough money to take his case to the Rota."

The annual report of the Rota has just been submitted, and it showed that 258 marriage cases were handled during the year 1956. About two-fifths of the people who asked the Rota for a decision annulling their marriage were unable to pay court costs. These charity litigants got a larger proportion of favorable decisions than did the paying suitors. This one fact alone should serve to silence those who pretend that money is essential to get a hearing in Rome. It is only right and just that if litigants in court can pay court costs, they should do so. In civil courts,

this is taken for granted. It should be taken for granted in ecclesiastical courts as well. The fact that the Rota did almost half its work in marriage cases without any such reimbursement should be impressive to any fairminded person.

Why and how does the Rota work? It might be compared to the U.S. Supreme Court in its function. An American citizen can appeal his case through the courts to the highest court in the land. Where the situation warrants it, a Catholic has a right to such an appeal to his own high court. Let us suppose a girl is forced into a marriage under the influence of grave fear. This fact (if it can be clearly proved) makes the marriage invalid from the very start. Usually the diocesan marriage court will be able to handle such a case. But occasionally there will be an appeal made from the lower court to the higher.

What the Rota will do in such a case is carefully examine all the facts, and without prejudice or favor, hand down its decision. In 1956 half the decisions upheld the validity of the marriage bond.

## Gambling against Odds

Catholics are pretty well accustomed to hearing sermons against "mixed marriage," which means the marriage of a Catholic with one not of his own faith. Most pastors touch on the subject from their pulpits at least several times a year. At the time of a parish mission there is sure to be a blast by the missionary. Moreover, the average pamphlet rack contains one or more booklets on the matter.

The thinking of some Catholics is, of course, that "priests have to talk that way." In reality, any priest with pastoral experience speaks in this matter very much from his heart. Enough trouble and sorrow is brought to him to convince him beyond shadow of a doubt of the dangers inherent in such marriages.

Several months ago the editors of *Ave Maria* conducted an exhaustive survey in this field. The conclusions they reached are based not on mere theory, but on cold, hard statistics, scientifically reached. Here is a brief digest of the *Ave Maria* findings:

Mixed marriage frequently leads to the loss of faith of one or both of the spouses, as well as of their children.

The divorce and separation rate is about three times higher in mixed Catholic-Protestant marriages than in marriages where both parties are of the same faith.

The best evidence we have indicates that in the United States the promises made in mixed marriages that the children will be raised Cath-

olic are not kept in about 30 percent of all mixed marriages.

A study made by the bishops found that about 30 percent of Catholics involved in a mixed marriage become lost to the faith.

The children of mixed marriage frequently suffer loss of faith. One YMCA survey found that where one parent was Protestant and the other Catholic, only 34 percent of their sons were practicing members of either faith.

We are not, of course, contending that it is impossible for a mixed marriage to be a happy one. In some cases the adjustment is readily and cheerfully made, and the faith kept strong. But certainly one is amply justified in pointing out that in a mixed marriage the chances of making such an adjustment are much slimmer; that the possibility of losing the faith is much more real.

These are realities which young people should face up to. A truly happy marriage is a difficult achievement under the best of circumstances. Should there not be very serious thought before multiplying the odds and gambling a life's happiness on a long shot?

## ICBM

These four letters are heavy with portent for the future. They stand for destruction unlimited. They are an abbreviation for the latest and most modern engine of world ruin: Intercontinental Ballistic Missile. A short reflection on the matter might prove salutary.

Let's break the title down to its component parts. A missile is, of course, a projectile which can be automatically launched and powered through the air at great speed. A ballistic missile is one which is electronically controlled, so that it can be directed to a certain objective with unerring aim. An intercontinental missile is one which can be directed across oceans and continents half way across the world.

The ICBM is not contemplated as a mechanized dove of peace. It is deliberately planned as a means of total destruction. Its warhead is designed to hold an atom bomb, or a hydrogen bomb, which will automatically be detonated upon impact with the target.

This is what could happen when the ICBM is perfected. A hundred or a thousand such missiles could be dispatched from hidden sites in Russia. All of them would be guided electronically along special beams so as to bring them to a hundred or a thousand American cities. They would make the trip in approximately fifteen minutes, flying much too fast and high to be intercepted by pursuit planes. There would be just fifteen minutes to prepare for their coming and to retaliate by dispatching our own missiles to destroy the other side of the world just as ours was in process of being destroyed.

Is this just scare talk? Not at all. There are not great scientific barriers in the way of perfecting the ICBM. It is a matter of development along more or less familiar

lines. Every day the missile makers are getting the correct technical answers. Already it is reported that our defense authorities have dispatched and controlled a missile in a 3000-mile-flight over the south Atlantic. Whether the Soviet Union also has a missile of comparable range is not known definitely. But American authorities do know that the Russians have tested a guided missile of considerable range, and that it is now in production.

Here are two concluding thoughts, the first in the words of Father E. A. Conway of Creighton University:

"I must solemnly warn that only an heroic and immediate effort, concentrated on this problem of a missile-testing moratorium, and enlisting the best minds of the whole world, can now save that world from the unbalancing terrors of a nuclear-missile stalemate, and win a few more years to work out a dependable disarmament program."

Lastly, one cannot reflect on the ICBM without thoughts of death and judgment and heaven and hell. Perhaps never before in world history was it so necessary for a great many people to be prepared for sudden death by being in the state of grace.

The true value of horse sense is clearly shown by the fact that the horse was afraid of the automobile during the period when pedestrians were laughing at it.

# LIGUORIANA

5th Sunday after Easter — May 26

## The Conditions of Prayer

By St. Alphonsus

Selected and Edited by

John P. Schaefer, C.SS.R.

**S**T. CYPRIAN says that, "prayer is omnipotent. It can do all things." This we read, too, in the book of Ecclesiasticus — that God has never refused to hear anyone who invoked His aid. "Who hath called upon Him, and He has despised him?" This He can never do. For He has promised to hear all who pray to Him. But this promise extends only to prayers which have the necessary conditions. Many pray, but because they pray negligently, they do not obtain the graces they deserve.

To pray as we ought, we must pray with humility, with confidence, and with perseverance.

### 1. HUMILITY

**S**T. JAMES tells us that God "resists the proud and gives grace to the humble." He cannot bear the proud. He rejects their petitions, and refuses to hear them. Let those who trust in their own strength and think themselves better than others, remember this. Let them remember that their prayers shall be rejected by the Lord.

On the other hand, God always hears the prayers of the humble. "The cry of the humble man penetrates the heavens, and he will not depart until God hears his prayer." St. Augustine makes these words of Sacred Scripture his own: "You humble yourself, and God comes to you. You exalt yourself, and He flies from you." If you humble yourself, God Himself comes, of His own accord, to embrace you. But if you exalt yourself, and boast of your wisdom and of your actions, He withdraws from you, and abandons you to your own nothingness.

The Lord cannot despise even the most miserable sinners when they repent from their hearts and humble themselves before Him, acknowledging that they are unworthy to receive a favor from Him. "A contrite and humble heart, O God, you will not despise."

### 2. CONFIDENCE

**N**O one has hoped in the Lord and has been confounded." These words are, indeed, most encouraging to sinners. They may have committed the most terrible crimes, yet they are told by the Holy Ghost, that "no man has hoped in the Lord

and has been confounded." He who prays with confidence obtains whatever he asks. "All things whatsoever you ask when you pray, believe that you shall receive, and they shall come to you." It is for this reason that Jesus Christ taught us to call upon God by no other name than that of *Father*. We may have recourse to Him with the same confidence with which a child seeks assistance from an affectionate parent.

In a way God is so solicitous for our welfare, that He has made Himself our debtor. "Ask, and it shall be given to you; seek, and you shall find; knock, and it shall be opened to you." "Why," asks St. Augustine, "should the Lord exhort us so strongly to ask for His graces if He did not wish to give them to us? He has even bound Himself by His promises to hear our prayers, and to bestow upon us all the graces which we ask with confidence of obtaining them."

Some may hesitate: "I have little confidence in God, because I am a sinner. I have been too ungrateful to Him, and therefore I see that I do not deserve to be heard." To such as these the words of St. Thomas are strong assurance: "The efficacy of our prayers, in obtaining graces from God, does not depend upon our merits, but on the divine mercy." As often as we ask with confidence favors which are conducive to our eternal salvation, God hears our prayer.

Note that I said, "favors conducive to our salvation." For should we ask something injurious to our souls, God does not, He could not hear us. For

example, should a person ask help from God to be revenged upon an enemy, or to accomplish what would be offensive to God, the Lord will not hear his prayers. Because, as St. John Chrysostom says, such a person offends God in the very act of prayer. He does not pray, but in a way mocks God.

We should always remember that the promise of Jesus Christ to hear those who pray to Him does not extend to all temporal favors which we ask. Such favors God does, indeed, grant to those who pray for them. But only when they are conducive to one's spiritual welfare. Otherwise He refuses them. And He refuses them because He knows that they would be injurious to our souls.

Spiritual favors, however, such as the pardon of our sins, perseverance in virtue, the gift of divine love and resignation to the divine will, should be asked of God absolutely, and with a firm confidence of obtaining them. "If you," says Jesus Christ, "being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give the good spirit to them that ask Him?" St. Bernard says: "How can God refuse graces conducive to salvation to those who seek them, when He exhorts even those who do not pray to ask them?"

Nor does God inquire whether the person who prays to Him is a just man or a sinner. For He has declared that "everyone who asks, receives." And to encourage us to pray and to ask with confidence for spiritual favors, He has said: "Amen, I say to

you: If you ask the Father anything in my name, He will give it to you." It is as though He said: "Sinners, though you do not deserve to receive the divine graces, I have merited them for you from my Father. Ask, then, in My name, and I promise that you will obtain whatsoever you demand."

### 3. PERSEVERANCE

**I**T is above all necessary that we persevere in prayer until death, never ceasing to pray. In so many passages of Sacred Scripture it is emphasized: "We ought always to pray." "Watch, therefore, praying at all times." "Pray without ceasing."

Such words imply, not only that we should pray always, but that we should endeavor to remove every occasion which may prevent us from praying. For, if we cease to pray, we will be deprived of the divine aid and shall be overcome by temptations. The grace of perseverance, as the Council of Trent has declared, is a gratuitous gift of God. We cannot merit it. But St. Augustine says that we can obtain it by prayer. Cardinal Bellarmin, therefore, teaches that "we must ask it daily, in order to obtain it every day."

If we, therefore, wish to persevere, we must pray continually. Our perseverance does not depend on one grace, but on the thousands of helps which we hope to obtain from God during our whole lives, that we may be preserved in His grace. To this chain of graces, a chain of prayers on our part must correspond. Without these prayers, God ordinarily

does not grant His graces. If we neglect to pray, and thus break the chain of prayers, the chain of graces shall also be broken, and we shall lose the grace of perseverance.

Men are frequently annoyed at being pressed for a favor. But God exhorts us to pray frequently. Instead of being dissatisfied, He is pleased with those who repeatedly ask His graces. This may be inferred from the words of Jesus Christ: "Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and you shall find; knock, and it shall be opened to you."

It was not enough for Him to say "ask" but He added "seek, knock." This was to show that during our whole lives we should be as insistent as beggars in asking alms. Though they should be refused, they do not cease to cry out, or to knock at the door. And they persist in asking relief until they obtain it.

**I**F, then, we wish to obtain from God the gift of perseverance, we must ask it from Him continually and persistently. We must ask it when we rise in the morning, in hearing Mass, in our prayers during the day, in going to bed at night, and particularly when we are tempted by the devil to commit any sin. As Tertullian says, "we must do violence to the Lord. Such violence is agreeable to God."

He especially takes great pleasure in seeing His Mother honored. He, therefore, wishes, as St. Bernard says, that all graces which we receive should pass through her hands. Hence

the holy doctor exhorts us "to seek grace, and to seek it through Mary. Because she is a mother, and her prayer cannot be fruitless." When

we ask her to obtain any grace for us, she graciously hears our petitions and prays for us. And the prayers of Mary are never rejected.

# Reader's Ask...

## Overhearing a Confession

*Louis G. Miller, C.S.S.R.*

**Q**UESTION: "I know that priests are bound by the seal of confession. They may not even at the cost of life itself reveal any confessional matter. But what about layfolk? I was standing in line waiting to go to confession in my parish church, and the person in the confessional talked so loudly I could hear some of the things he said. I felt embarrassed and worried about it."

**A**Nswer: One should, of course, take reasonable means to avoid overhearing another's confession. Thus it is a wise measure, when waiting your turn, to stand several yards away from the confessional door. Where there is a line of people, the tendency, of course, is to edge closer. It is a tendency which should be resisted for the sake of decorum as well as secrecy.

If unavoidably one overhears confessional matter, one should not get worried and excited about it. If you could not help overhearing it, there is no fault on your part, and certainly no sin.

What should be borne in mind, however, is that in such circumstances one is bound not to reveal to others what he has overheard under the same obligation which binds the priest who hears the con-

fession. One should try to dismiss the matter from one's mind, and in any case make no reference whatever to it in talking to others.

Here is a somewhat correlated problem: What about telling other people the penance you received in confession, or giving them a digest of the advice given you by the confessor?

Certainly you are free, if you feel in the mood for public confession, to reveal your own sins to your friends, or even to your enemies. In regard to confessional penance and advice, however, caution should be exercised. There is always danger that others may draw the wrong conclusions. The confessor doubtless has his reasons for advising you in a certain way, with reference to your personal character and the special difficulties you encounter. The advice you receive might not be suitable at all for someone else. Yet if you talk freely, others may jump to the conclusion (quite wrongly) that the spiritual prescription fits their own spiritual ailments as well as yours.

On the whole, it would seem better to preserve a decent silence about your confession and everything said in the confessional which touches on matters of conscience.



# BOOK REVIEWS

Thomas Tobin, C.S.S.R.

We recommend that books listed or reviewed in THE LIGUORIAN be purchased at your local bookstore. If you cannot obtain the book in that way, you may write to THE LIGUORIAN for further information.

## Auntie Mame

Patrick Dennis

This novel has been on the list of best sellers for over 100 weeks; it has also been adapted into a successful stage play. Auntie Mame is the maiden aunt who raises an orphan boy as one has never been raised before. Mame is the woman who never grows old and who always tries to remain the eternal youth, and a rather eccentric and flamboyant one at that! The author has sketched some scenes that are hilarious, some that are funny and some that are not quite either funny or hilarious. The book does furnish many episodes that could be developed into very comical stage pieces. The language is at times vulgar and obscene; some of the episodes are a bit risque. The mature reader might enjoy meeting the unconventional Auntie Mame; this reviewer found the book quite overrated.

(Vanguard Press, \$3.50)

## The Trapp Family Singers

Maria Augusta Trapp

The Trapp family story presents to modern Americans a family which not only sings but prays and plays together. The mother, Maria Augusta Trapp, retells the family history of this remarkable group which is so fully and entirely Catholic. Excellent book for parents, especially those in the C.F.M. and the Cana Conference groups.

(Image, \$85)

## The Family Rosary Novena

A magazine-size illustrated booklet on the rosary. Short reflections, a Bible reading plus modern pictures help to make this booklet a valuable aid for teaching the young the rosary and also a means of instructing the adult reader. A worthwhile work by a group of Catholic laymen.

(Catholic Art Services Inc., \$1.00)

**Maria Chapdelaine****Louis Hemon**

This reprint of a minor classic of Catholic fiction will enable a new generation to become familiar with the work of Louis Hemon, the Frenchman who found inspiration for this simple tale in Canada. A simple folk tale with a beautiful and strong heroine.

(Image Books, \$3.65)

**These Women Walked With God****Rev. M. Raymond, O.C.S.O.**

This is the third volume and the last one published of the author's Saga of Citeaux, the story of the Cistercian's way of life. The Family Who Overtook Christ, Three Religious Rebels and Burnt Out Incense are the three previous books to appear.

**These Women Walked With God** is written that the lives of fifteen Cistercian women who walked with God 700 years ago may serve as an example to moderns. They lived in a world that knew the turmoil of the Crusades, that witnessed bloody persecution of the Jews, a world that tottered on its foundations when Genghis Khan threatened the western world. Yet these saintly women — over half of them are canonized saints — showed the meaning of life to be found in living with God. Brilliantly written with an abundance of sparkling figures of speech and piercing insights this latest book by the well-known Trappist monk will startle and stimulate readers to thought and possibly action.

(Bruce, \$3.95)

**Faith and Prejudice****Cardinal Newman**

Of the many volumes of sermons written by Cardinal Newman, only two volumes contain sermons preached by Newman as a Catholic. This present small book gathers together nine sermons from his preaching after his conversion in 1845. The first seven are texts of sermons written and preached soon after Newman returned to England from his ordination in Rome. Simple in style and practical in content they were addressed to the people of the cathedral in Birmingham. The last two are from his later years. The sermon preached at the dedication of the diocesan seminary at Birmingham is a masterly prediction for the young clerical student of the infidelity of the future. An excellent addition to the published works of Newman.

(Sheed and Ward, \$2.50)

### **Apologia Pro Vita Sua**

John Henry Cardinal Newman

This complete and unabridged edition of Cardinal Newman's History of His Religious Opinions tells the full story of Dr. Kingsley's accusation of lying levelled against Newman and his magnificent defense of his character by explaining his religious opinions. This is a major classic of the English language. Philip Hughes supplies background material about the life of Cardinal Newman and the occasion of the writing of this book.

(Image Books, \$ .95)

### **Francis of the Crucified** Myles Schmitt, O.F.M. Cap.

Of the writing of books about St. Francis of Assisi there is no end which is great evidence of his appeal to every generation. Our rich generation has fallen captive to the charm of the poor man of Assisi. Father Schmitt has written not a biography, but a study of the spirit of St. Francis. His studies are built around the practice of the beatitudes by the lover of Christ. A good addition to the Franciscan storehouse of books.

(Bruce, \$3.00)

### **On the Truth of the Catholic Faith**

St. Thomas Aquinas

Translated by Vernon J. Bourke

This is an Image Book Original, a new translation in two volumes of the third book of the Summa Contra Gentiles. A scholarly introduction and notes by Dr. Bourke add to the value of the translation of this second best known book of the angelic Doctor.

(Image Books, Vol. I. \$ .85;  
Vol. II. \$ .85)

### **A Handbook of the Catholic Faith**

Dr. N. G. M. Van Doornik

Rev. S. Jelsma

Rev. A. Van de Lisdonk

Rev. John Greenwood

The three Dutch authors of this book are actively engaged in convert work and have written this book with the prospective convert or at least the sincere inquirer in mind. This is a very thorough presentation (there are over 500 pages in the book) that will appeal to one who really wants to make a profound and leisurely study of the principal truths of the Church.

(Image Books, \$1.35)

**My Lord, What A Morning**

Marian Anderson

This autobiography by the famous singer is a very simple presentation of the facts of her life without too much personal comment. Despite the artless simplicity or perhaps, because of it, the reader's attention is easily captured and fairly easily retained. It is the story of a personal and racial triumph of a poor colored girl who won fame and financial success as a singer. The great moments in her life were the public testimonial in Washington after being refused admission into Constitution Hall and her breaking of the color barrier in the Metropolitan Opera.

Miss Anderson reveals a deep religious faith that resulted from the precepts but especially the example of her mother. She is very fair and restrained in her attitude toward integration, although her position is very clear from her refusal to sing for segregated audiences. To this reviewer there is only one sour note in her story. It is her very open admission that she and her husband rejected children so that her career as a musician would not be affected. Important as her career is, motherhood is even more important.

(Viking, \$5.00)

**Saint Among the Hurons**

Francis X. Talbot, S.J.

Father Francis X. Talbot has written the recognized biography of St. Jean De Brebeuf, the North American martyr. Well worth reading.

(Image Books, \$.95)

**Meditating the Gospels**

Emeric Lawrence, O.S.B.

There are several unusual features about this book of meditations. First of all the author has placed them on a very personal basis; he is talking with Christ and addresses Christ in the second person. In his words it is an "I to Thou" relationship. Secondly, this book is different in its comprehension since there are meditations for the proper Masses of the liturgical cycle, for feasts of the saints, as well as for the votive Masses. Short and personal, these meditations will serve to make the reader more Christ-conscious. Father Leo Trese writes the preface.

(Liturgical Press, \$3.90)

**Carmelite Devotions**

A complete collection of prayers and devotions of especial interest to lovers of our Lady and especially to Carmelite tertiaries.

(Discalced Carmelites, \$1.50)

# LUCID INTERVALS

A cowboy from the wide open spaces entered a restaurant and ordered a steak. Ten minutes later the waitress brought in a T-bone steak that was very, very rare. The cowboy cut into the steak and then called the waitress.

"But that has been cooked," said the waitress.

"Cooked?" roared the cowboy. "I've seen steers hurt worse than this get well."

Doctor: "You must not give your husband strong coffee. It makes him too excited."

Wife: "But you should see how excited he gets when I give him weak coffee."

Little Willie came home after playing a tough game of football.

"Ma," he said, "you once told Aunt Mary that I had your eyes and daddy's nose. Well, look at me now. I'm like grandpa—no teeth!"

"We are now passing the most famous brewery in Berlin," explained the guide.

"We are not!" said the visiting American, as he hopped off the sightseeing bus.

An angry woman telephoned her grocer.

"I sent my little boy to get three pounds of peaches and you sent me only two pounds."

"Madam," was the reply, "my scales are accurate. Have you weighed your little boy?"

Father: "Why is it that you are always at the bottom of the class?"

Albert: "It doesn't make any difference. They teach the same things at both ends."

The guest watched with amazement as the small boy amused himself by driving nails into the furniture. Recovering himself a bit, he said to his host:

"Joe, isn't that an expensive pastime your son has? How can you afford it?"

"Oh, it's not bad," answered the father. "We get the nails wholesale."

Johnny had been trying to raise his marks in spelling with the teacher's help, and she suggested that he might remember the words better if he knew their meaning when he learned to spell them. Then she said: "Now, Johnny, spell straight."

Johnny: "S-t-r-a-i-g-h-t."

Teacher: "Correct. Now what does it mean?"

Johnny looked up from his desk to reply: "Without ginger ale!"

Tell the average man that there are 270,568,935 stars in the universe and he will believe you. Put up a sign saying, "Fresh paint!" — and he will have to conduct an investigation.

Government experts, it is said, have developed a method of aging paper money during manufacture to make it last longer. But don't be of high expectations. This doesn't mean what it seems to say.

Father, pleasantly tired after Sunday dinner lay down on the sofa to take a nap and was soon sleeping soundly. The children wondered why he did not take them for their promised Sunday afternoon walk. Finally his five-year-old daughter pried open one of his eyelids, peered in anxiously and reported: "He's still in there."

# BEST SELLERS

A Moral Evaluation of Current Books, Published at the University of Scranton, Pa.

## HEADLINERS

(Number in parenthesis refers to classification according to rating used in general list.)

Peyton Place (IV)—*Metalious*  
The Fountain Overflows (I)—*West*  
Compulsion (III)—*Levin*  
Don't Go Near the Water (IV)—  
    *Brinkley*  
The Tribe That Lost Its Head (IIb)  
    —*Monsarrat*  
The Philadelphian (IIb)—*Powell*  
The Etruscan (IIb)—*Waldari*  
Tower in the West (IIb)—*Norris*  
Jericho's Daughters (IIb)—*Wellman*  
Auntie Mame (IIa)—*Dennis*  
Twilight for the Gods (IIa)—*Gann*  
Stopover; Tokyo (I)—*Marquand*

## I. Suitable for general reading:

Martyr in Scotland—*Collins*  
The Running Iron—*Fish*  
Mark Three for Murder—*Hansen*  
Raising Demons—*Jackson*  
The Sea Dreamer—*Jean-Aubry*  
Bach and the Heavenly Choir—*Ruber*  
The Strange Case of Mr. Pelham—  
    *Armstrong*  
A Legacy—*Bedford*  
Gabrielle—*Gabrielson*  
A Treasury of Great Mysteries—  
    *Haycraft & Beecroft*  
Death on a Quiet Day—*Innes*  
Arms and Men—*Millis*  
The Complete Short Stories of Mark  
    Twain—*Neider*  
Mr. Lincoln—*Randall*  
At Whatever Cost—*Thompson*  
Ships in the Sky—*Toland*  
To See the Dream—*West*

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### A. Because of advanced style and contents:

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The Almost Dead—*Herber*  
The Blue Camellia—*Keyes*  
The Legacy of Holmes and Brandeis—  
    *Konefsky*  
The Brandeis Reader—*Pollack*  
The Methods of Maigret—*Simenon*  
The American Sex Revolution—  
    *Sorokin*  
Pirate—*Whipple*  
Krushchev and Stalin's Ghost—*Wolfe*  
Comedy in the Soviet Theater—  
    *Yershov*  
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Bitter Victory—*Hardy*  
The Dark of Summer—*Linklater*  
The Eye of Love—*Sharp*  
Give Us This Day—*Stewart*

### B. Because of immoral incidents which do not, however, invalidate the book as a whole:

A Small Fire—*Schmitt*  
Rogue in Space—*Brown*  
The Wilderness Brigade—*Demarest*  
A Far Place—*Fuller*  
Company Q—*O'Connor*

## III. Permissible for the discriminating adult:

The Day the Money Stopped—*Gill*  
Seats of the Mighty—*Harwood*  
How to Understand the Opposite Sex  
    —*Menninger*  
The Last Angry Man—*Green*  
Memoirs—*Karolyi*

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